

لحظات ساكنة

Silent Moments

The description of before
and after death aspects

By

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Translated by

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Publisher's Note

All praise is due to the *Rubb* (Lord) of the worlds. And may Allâh exalt the mention of His veracious and trustworthy Prophet Muhammad, his household and all of his Companions.

The book '*Lahzât Sâkinah*' or *Silent Moments* deals with the science of death, which is the research work of brother Abdul-Malik Al-Qasim, a renowned and a pious scholar of the Qur'ân and the *Sunnah* as well as Arabic language. He has studied a number of books on *Zuhd* (modesty, living a simple life) and soft advices written by *As-Salaf As-Salih* and collected important statements of the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, *A'immah* and religious scholars of the *Ummah*.

Nowadays, these worthy books are hardly available and due to their being in large volumes, people have no time to get benefited from them.

About death and after death, there is a sound creed in Islam and it has been mentioned and discussed many times in the Qur'ân and the *Sunnah*. As Hasan Basri ربه الله, said at his death time:

“A weak soul, but a tremendous calamity to come. Certainly, we are all for Allâh and to Him shall be our return.”

In view of its importance, Darussalam has rendered '*Lahzat Sakinah*' (*Silent Moments*) into the English language with the prior permission from the author. We have translated so many books from the same author for the English readers which are appreciated by the readers all over the world.

Finally, I am grateful to all brothers who have contributed in bringing about this valuable book, and present this work as a humble effort of ours for His sake.

Abdul Malik Mujahid
General Manager

Preface

All the thanks are due to Allâh, Who said:

﴿اعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَهَوٌّ وَزِينَةٌ وَتَفَاخُرٌ بَيْنَكُمْ وَتَكَاثُرٌ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ
وَالْأَوْلَادِ﴾ [الحديد: ٢٠]

“Know that the life of this world is only play and amusement, pomp and mutual boasting among you, and rivalry in respect of wealth and children.” (57:20)

And may Allâh’s peace and blessings be on the most honorable Prophet and Messenger, Muhammad ﷺ.

It is a fact that materialism, which has taken over the lives of so many people, played a major role in turning mankind away from thinking about their final destination and imminent end. Consequently, their religious resolve and strength have succumbed to various weaknesses and shortcomings, and ignoring the rights of Allâh the Exalted and Ever-High, has become rampant.

Allâh has allowed me the chance to read about tales of *Zuhd*¹ and soft advice that scholars of the Muslim *Ummah*² collected in large volumes; some were in books exclusively on the subject of *Zuhd*, while much was mentioned in collections on various other subjects, such as biographies and life stories of *Salaf* and latter scholars. Therefore, it is somewhat difficult to benefit from these books, due to their being in large volumes, as well as, having few available copies in circulation. Further, some of these books contain exaggerations and unduly elevate some of creation above their deserved status. Also, these books contain fake tales and superstitious accounts conveyed from the *Sufis* and other deviant sects. I collected stories about *Zuhd* from these books and

¹ Modesty, living a simple life.

² *Ummah* means Muslim nation, followers of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

referred them to original resources, so as to make it easy to verify these accounts and to help those who seek to learn more about this subject from these resources.

I chose a name for this series, that contains over twenty parts (on aspects of worship, dealings and mannerism), from a statement taken from Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal رحمه الله, when the mannerism of those who have *Wara'* (fear from Allâh) was mentioned, "I ask Allâh not to despise us! Where are we compared to these (righteous) people?"¹

Moreover, I only mentioned the *Zuhd* of the *Salaf*², choosing unpopular tales in this regard, and there are ample tales and accounts from both types.

I assert that I, as compared to these righteous people, am duly expressed by a poem from Imam Ash-Shâfi رحمه الله:

"I love righteous people, even though I am not one of them, that I might gain the benefit of *Shafâ'ah*.³

I dislike those who trade in sin, even though we might be both dealing in the same trade." (poetry)

Dear Reader!

Do not be surprised at the *Zuhd* and righteousness of our *Salaf* and the tremendous activity they had with regards to performing acts of worship. They achieved an exalted level with regards to *Zuhd* (asceticism) and *Taqwa*.⁴ Further, in recent times, we have

¹ *Siyaru 'A'lamin-Nubalâ*, by Adh-Dhahabi, vol. 11 p. 226

² The *Salaf* are the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ; *At-Tabi'in*, the second generation and *Taba Tabi'in*, the third generation of Islam, the best people as the Prophet ﷺ described them.

³ Intercession of the Angels, Prophets and righteous people on behalf of other Muslims with Allâh on the Day of Resurrection, only by Allâh's Leave and Permission

⁴ *Taqwa* means 'to fear Allâh and fulfil one's duty to Him by performing righteous acts and refraining from prohibitions.'

become weak in this regard and this is why these accounts and tales seem strange and exalted in magnitude to us.

I should also assert that the best guidance there is, is the guidance of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, and whatever defies his guidance will be rejected from its doer.

This book seeks to encourage acts of worship, reminds with the Hereafter and familiarizes us with the righteous believers. We ask Allâh to make this book sincere in the sake of His Honorable Face.

**Abdul Malik Muhammad
Abdur-Rahman Al-Qasim**

First Stop:

Death

Hasan Basri رَحِمَهُ اللهُ was asked, “O Abu Sa‘îd! What should we do? We sit with people who bring fear to our hearts,¹ so much so, that our hearts would almost fly away in fright.” He answered them by saying, “By Allâh! It is better for you to associate with those who bring fear to you, so that you may gain safety,² than to associate with people who make you feel safe,³ for you might earn fear in this case.”⁴

-
- ¹ From Allâh and the Hereafter, and from death and what comes afterwards.
- ² in the Hereafter from Allâh’s torment and the afflictions of the grave and the Day of Resurrection, by performing righteous good deeds.
- ³ in this life from Allâh’s torment and His just plot against the disbelievers and the sinners.
- ⁴ in the Hereafter, upon returning to Allâh with a record full of sin and heedlessness.

Death

Death is a frightening, horrifying fact that faces all living things, none can resist it, even those who gather around the dying person. Death is a repeated occurrence that strikes in all instances and throughout the ages, and it strikes the young and the old, the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak and the healthy and the ill. Allâh, the Exalted, said:

﴿ قُلْ إِنَّ الْمَوْتَ الَّذِي تَفِرُّونَ مِنْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مُلَاقِيكُمْ ثُمَّ تُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عِلِّيِّ الْعَلِيِّ
وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴾ [الجمعة: ٨]

“Say (to them): ‘Verily, the death from which you flee will surely meet you, then you will be sent back to (Allâh), the All-Knower of the unseen and the seen, and He will tell you what you used to do.’ ” (62:8)

The end of life is the same for all, for they all die:

﴿ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ ﴾ [آل عمران: ١٨٥]

“Everyone shall taste death.” (3:185)

However, the destination after death is not the same:

﴿ فَرِيقٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَفَرِيقٌ فِي السَّعِيرِ ﴾ [الشورى: ٧]

“A party will be in Paradise (those who believed in Allâh and followed what Allâh’s Messenger ﷺ brought them) and a party in the blazing Fire (Hell) (those who disbelieved in Allâh and followed not what Allâh’s Messenger ﷺ brought them).” (42:7)

Allâh has created life and death for a great purpose and a supreme wisdom, just as He said:

﴿ الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْغَفُورُ ﴾ [الملك: ٢]

“Who has created death and life that He may test you which of you is best in deed. And He is the All-Mighty, the

Oft-Forgiving.” (67:2)

Allâh described the agonies of death in four *Āyat* (Verses in the Qur’ân).

First, His True Statement:

﴿ وَجَاءَتْ سَكْرَةُ الْمَوْتِ بِالْحَقِّ ﴾ [ق: ١٩]

“And the stupor of death will come in truth.” (50:19)

Second, His True Statement:

﴿ وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذِ الظَّالِمُونَ فِي غَمَرَاتِ الْمَوْتِ ﴾ [الأنعام: ٩٣]

“And if you could but see when the *Zâlimûn* (polytheists and wrongdoers) are in the agonies of death.” (6:93)

Third, Allâh’s True Statement:

﴿ فَلَوْلَا إِذَا بَلَغَتِ الْحُلُقُومَ ﴾ [الواقعة: ٨٣]

“Then why do you not (intervene) when (the soul of a dying person) reaches the throat?” (56:83)

Fourth, Allâh’s True Statement:

﴿ كَلَّا إِذَا بَلَغَتِ التَّرَاقِيَ ﴾ [القيامة: ٢٦]

“Nay, when (the soul) reaches to the collarbone (i.e., up to the throat in its exit).” (75:26)

Because of the enormity of what will certainly come to pass and occur to us, the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said:

«لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ مَا أَعْلَمُ لَضَحِكْتُمْ قَلِيلًا وَلَبْكَيْتُمْ كَثِيرًا» .

“If you but knew what I know, you would laugh little and weep a lot.” (*Al-Bukhârî* and *Muslim*)

Certainly, there is a lesson and a wisdom to be drawn from death, in addition to, a reminder and a warning, and sufficient it is as a warner. The Prophet ﷺ said:

«كَفَىٰ بِالْمَوْتِ وَاعِظًا»

“Death is sufficient as a reminder.”¹

There are many *Ayât* and *Ahâdith* on the subject of death, which, indeed, is the harrowing incident, the hardest occurrence, the glass that is full of the bitters and the untasty drink. Death is the occurrence that ends the lusts and severs the comforts, and the bringer of all hated things. Death takes apart your sides, separates between your limbs and dissipates your organs. Therefore, it is the tremendous incident and the momentous occasion, and its day is surely the hard day to come.²

However, we tend to forget death, or pretend to forget it. We dislike remembering and meeting it, even though it shall certainly come to pass and there is no way to avoid or avert it. How strange it is that a wise person witnesses how death takes possession of his generation and neighbors, yet, he still lives comfortably, even though he rapidly grows older. How strange it is that a person sees snakes approaching him, yet, he is not terrified. Does not the old realize that death is slowly creeping onto his limbs? Does not he realize that he is gradually losing his strength and becoming overcome by all types of weaknesses? Has not he seen the black turning white and the shortcomings increasing by the passage of each day?³

Shortcomings will keep increasing in magnitude until one passes over the bridge of death, which he must and will pass over, crossing to the Hereafter. Ibn Mas‘ud رضى الله عنه once said:

“The believer will not attain comfort until he meets Allâh.”⁴

The Meeting with Allâh will not occur but after tasting the

¹ *At-Tabarâni* collected this *Hadith*, and also Ibn ‘Asâkir in, *Ta‘ziyatu-Muslim*. The chain of this *Hadith* narration is very weak; and refer to, *Silsilatul-Ahadith Ad-Da‘ifah*, by Al-Albani, *Hadith* no. 502

² *At-Tadhkirah fi Ahwali Al-Mauta wa Umûril-Âkhirah*, p. 28

³ *Saidul-Khâtir*, by Bin Al-Jauzi, p. 533

⁴ *Sharhus-Sudûr bi-Sharhi ‘Hâilil-Mauta wal Qubûr*, by As-Suyuti, p. 4

agonies and hardships of death, which we strive hard to forget! Surely, the hearts of those who are indulging in this life, dedicated to its deceitful delights and loving its comforts will ignore remembering death, and will hate and run away from being reminded of it. They are those whom Allâh described:

﴿قُلْ إِنَّ الْمَوْتَ الَّذِي تَفِرُّونَ مِنْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مُلَاقِيكُمْ ثُمَّ تُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عِلِّيِّينَ
وَالشَّهَادَةُ فَيُنذِرُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ﴾ [الجمعة: ٨]

“Say (to them): ‘Verily, the death from which you flee will surely meet you, then you will be sent back to (Allâh), the All-Knower of the unseen and the seen, and He will tell you what you used to do.’ ” (62:8)

Therefore, wherever you go, then death will meet you, and no matter how far you stray away from it, it will call you:

“ O soul! Prepare for death and seek your safe passage, for surely, the wise person is he who is prepared.

You have become sure that no living soul shall live forever and that certainly, there is no averting death.” (poetry)

Dear Brother and Sister!

It is a wonder that you should be happy, even though you are being deceived, and indulge in heedless play, while unaware of what is being kept in wait for you. You are being deceived by your health and forget the nearness of illness. You also delight at your well-being while unaware of the closeness of pain. Certainly, the death of others has only made apparent the immanence of your death, and the graves of others have made apparent your own grave even before death approaches you. You have been busy in fulfilling your lusts instead of remembering your demise:

“As if you have not heard the news of those who perished before, nor seen what time does to those who are still

alive.” (poetry)¹

We hear the news of death, but forget, and see tears of grief falling down, but none among us feels fright, except those on whom Allâh has bestowed His Mercy.

There were those who were not busied by this life nor deceived by long hopes, and they prepared for this occasion -death- by abandoning sins and collecting righteous deeds. Al-Qa‘qâ‘ bin Hakeem said:

“I have been preparing for death for the past thirty years. Therefore, when it comes, I would not hasten or delay doing anything.”²

We hate it that someone talks about death, so much so that many of us get angry if death is mentioned. Some give the excuse for this attitude that there is no need to annoy people and spoil their gatherings by mentioning the lessons drawn from death.

Hasan Basri رحمه الله was asked, “O Abu Sa‘îd! What should we do? We sit with people who make us afraid (from death) that makes our hearts fly away.” He said, “By Allâh! If you associate with someone who makes you afraid, so that you earn safety, is better than associating with someone who makes you feel safe, for in this case, un-safety might touch you.”³

If you do not remember that day and prepare for it, it will surprise you tomorrow while you are busy in your affairs. Therefore, take a lesson from those who prepared for it and died in that state.

Hasan Basri رحمه الله said:

“Those who were before you used to often consider the

¹ *Saidul Khâtir*, p. 26

² *Al-'Ihyâ'*, vol. 4 p. 484

³ *Al-'Ihyâ'*, vol. 4 p. 170

nearness of death. One of them would often take water for purity, fulfill the call of nature and perform ablution, fearing that Allâh's Command (death) might come to him while he is not in a state of purity.”¹

Also, Ar-Rabi' bin Bizzah رَحِمَهُ اللهُ said:

“I am amazed at the creations, they are unaware about a truthful matter that they see with their eyes and to which truth their hearts testify. Yet, here they are busy from remembering it, engaging in playful heedlessness.” He added, “By Allâh! This heedlessness is a mercy from Allâh and a bounty that He bestowed on creation. Otherwise, the believers among them would be losing their minds, their hearts would fly away, crushed with fear, and they would not enjoy life, if they constantly remembered death.”²

By Allâh, even the Angle of Death who is entrusted with the job of capturing the souls upon death, will die. Allâh the Exalted said:

﴿كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ ۝ وَبَقِيَ وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ﴾ [الرحمن: ٢٦، ٢٧]

“Whatsoever is on it (the earth) will perish. And the Face of your Lord full of majesty and honor will remain forever.” (55:26,27)

Yet, where are the remembrance and the taking of lessons from that day, similar to the way our righteous *Salaf* remembered death and drew lessons from contemplating their destination?

Hakeem bin Nuh رَحِمَهُ اللهُ said to some of his brethren:

“Mâlik bin Dinâr رَحِمَهُ اللهُ was reclining one night, from the beginning of the night to its end, without offering a *Sajdah* or a *Rak'ah* during that night. We were with him at sea at the time. In the morning I said to him, ‘O Mâlik! Your night was long! You neither prayed nor invoked Allâh.’ He

¹ *Az-Zuhd*, by ‘Abdullâh bin Al-Mubarak, p. 99

² *Sifat us-Safwah*, by Ibn Al-Jauzi, vol. 3 p. 353

wept and said, ‘If the creation but knows what they will meet tomorrow, they will never find comfort in living. By Allâh! When I contemplated the horror and darkness of the night, I remembered the stand (before Allâh) and the horror of that incident. On that Day, everyone will be concerned about his own self, no father shall avail for his son nor offspring shall avail for his father.’ He became very anxious for a time, and then calmed down. Those who were with us in the ship admonished me saying, ‘You know that he cannot bear being reminded (of death, the Last Day, and so forth), so why did you remind him?’ Ever after that, I did not remind him but occasionally.”¹

No believer feels fear today, but will be safe tomorrow on account of his drawing lessons and performing righteous, good deeds during his life. We are living a life in which Allâh bestows on us His Favors day and night, but we are wasting our life in other than what we were created for. This is why when death comes all of a sudden, some will beg of Allâh,

﴿ رَبِّ ارْجِعُونِ ﴾ [المؤمنون: ٩٩]

“My Lord! Send me back.” (23:99)

But, why should you go back and return?

﴿ لَعَلِّي أَعْمَلُ صَالِحًا فِيمَا تَرَكْتُ ﴾ [المؤمنون: ١٠٠]

“So that I may do good in that which I have left behind!”
(23:100)

That Day has not come yet. Therefore, why do you not perform good deeds while able to do so and while healthy, since the Angel of Death has not come to you yet?

Allâh made death the destiny of all slaves, the end of everyone and the destination that this life of pride is headed to. He has

¹ *Jannatur-Rida fî ut-Taslîmi Lima Qaddara llâhu wa Qada*, by Muhammad bin ‘Asim Al-Gharnati, vol. 1 p. 98

divided His slaves into two parties, an obedient and a sinner, and made their final destination of two types, the dwelling of delight and the dwelling of torment. None shall avert death or be safe from it:

﴿كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ﴾ [الرحمن: ٢٦]

“Whatsoever is on it (the earth) will perish.” (55:26)

Allâh did not make a distinction between the young and the old, and the rich and the poor. All of this is the measure of the All-Knower, the Most-Kind:

﴿وَمَا يُعَمَّرُ مِنْ مُعَمَّرٍ وَلَا يُنْقَصُ مِنْ عُمُرِهِ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ﴾

[فاطر: ١١]

“And no aged man is granted a length of life nor is a part cut off from his life (or another man’s life), but is in a Book (*Al-Lauh Al-Mahfûz*). Surely, that is easy for Allâh.” (35:11)

Therefore, the wise one is he who accuses himself of shortcomings and works for the time after death, he who rushes to work righteousness before the chance to work passes and ends. Surely, the Muslim is he who surrenders to Predestination and Preordainment, and the believer is he who assures his gaining a reward by being patient in the face of afflictions and harm that might befall him.¹

One of our predecessors said:

“I am amazed at he who knows that death is certain, yet he laughs. I am amazed at he who knows that the Fire is true, yet he rejoices. I am amazed at he who witnesses how life changes the condition of its people, yet he feels safe. I am amazed at he who knows that Predestination is true, yet he

¹ *Saidul Khatir*, p. 8

tires himself (vigorously seeking the bounties of life).”¹

We see the door to death wide open and the number of graves increase. This is death, every day it touches us somehow and warns us every moment. Did we ask ourselves about our next life, knowing that:

“Death is a door through which all must pass, I wonder what type of dwelling this door is leading to? If you work in Allâh’s Pleasure, then your dwelling will be the Garden of Eternity, but if you fall into shortcomings, then it will be the Fire.” (poetry)²

If you remember and your heart becomes afraid, then your heart will be headed towards righteousness and success, just as Ad-Daqqâq asserted:

“He who often remembers death will be endowed with three qualities: repenting soon afterwards, having a contentful heart and being active performing acts of worship. He who forgets death will earn, as way of recompense, three characteristics: delaying repentance, discontent with sufficient provisions and being lazy performing the acts of worship.”

We only remember death when it strikes and its affliction comes, and if we are reminded that someone has died, we might remember death then, as if it is the path of that person alone. Therefore, we grieve for losing the dead, but do not realize what will befall us tomorrow or the day after tomorrow.

However, those who think about the repercussions of life will become aware, and those who are certain that the path is long, will prepare for the journey.

Dear Reader!

It is a right on he whose demise will be by death, whose bed will

¹ *Mukashafatul-Qulûb*, p. 157

² *Diwanu Abil-'Atahiyah*, p. 868

be sand and who will have worms as companions, *Munkar* and *Nakir*¹ as associates, the grave as residence, the belly of the earth as dwelling, the Day of Resurrection as the appointed Meeting time and Paradise or Hell as destination, to only think about death and remember it often. He ought to prepare for death, indulge in its affairs, long for its coming and seek its path. He ought to consider himself among the dead and see himself among the residents of the graves. Certainly, all that shall come to pass is near, while what will not come is far away. Moreover, preparing for a thing is only made easy by the heart often remembering it, and this only occurs by listening to ways and means that remind of it and contemplating about whatever alerts us to its imminence.²

Beloved brother and sister! This is the advice that was given by Yahya bin Mu'âdh gave us:

“Do not be one whose (evil) legacy is announced on the day he dies and whose (evil) deeds are exposed by the Scale on the Day of Gathering.”³

It is because of these fears and constant reminders that when death was mentioned to Muhammad bin An-Nadr, his body would shake for a while, until he calmed down afterwards.

“O son of Adam! Your mother gave birth to you while you were weeping, while those around you were laughing in joy.

Work for the day, the day you die, might that you will be laughing in joy then, while they will be weeping for you.”⁴
(poetry)

¹ *Munkar* and *Nakir* are the two angels who will ask every dead person about the Lord, he or she worshipped, and the religion and Messenger he or she followed.

² *Al-'Ihyâ'*, vol. 4 p. 475

³ *At-Tadhkirah*, by Al-Qurtubi p. 102

⁴ *Saidul Khâtir*, p. 203

Weep for yourself, before you are wept for. Compel yourself to perform acts of obedience, before you are carried on people's necks. Hold yourself accountable, before you are held accountable. They are only a few moments during which you hold yourself accountable, but are far better than days that are lost and for which you will be recompensed.

Abdullâh bin Shamit رحمه الله said:

“I heard my father saying, ‘O you who is deceived by his long period of health, have you not heard of a person who died without illness? O you who is deceived by his long hope, have you not seen he who was taken away suddenly? Are you being deceived by good health? Does having long hopes make you feel safe? Is it the Angel of Death whom you are challenging?’

Certainly, when the Angel of Death comes, he will not be prevented from you on account of your wealth, or the number of your gatherings. Do you not know that the hour of death brings tremendous hardships and grief in addition to, sorrow for succumb to shortcomings?’ He would then say, ‘May Allâh grant His Mercy to a slave who works for (the time) after death.’”

One of the unique moments occurs when a dying person becomes alert all of a sudden, for at that moment, he becomes so alert, worried and eager for his past life. He would wish he is left alive, so that he could acquire what he lost and repent sincerely, in such strong emotions that compare to his certainty that death is overcoming him at the moment, to the extent of almost killing himself with grief.

What we witness in graves carries the biggest reminder and lesson, for he who carries a dead corpse today will tomorrow be carried, and he who returns from the graveyard to his house will be carried away from his house to the graveyard tomorrow. Then, he will be left alone, tied to his actions, which will earn

him good for good and evil for evil. Yet, how few are those who draw a lesson from all this and become energetic with regards to performing righteous actions and deeds.

Thâbit Al-Bunâni رحمه الله once said:

“*Tuba* (a tree in Paradise) for he who remembers the hour of death, and verily, if a slave remembers death often, then the effect of this remembrance will appear in his actions.”¹

Those who are certain that death is coming tomorrow, will fill their days in the obedience of Allâh, the Exalted and Most-Honored. Day after day, they will stay at the righteous course until certainty (death) comes to them, just as Allâh said:

﴿وَأَعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَكَ الْيَقِينُ﴾ [الحجر: ٩٩]

“And worship your Lord until there comes unto you the certainty (i.e., death).” (15:99)

Anas ؓ said, “The Prophet ﷺ drew several lines and said:

«هَذَا الْإِنْسَانُ ، وَهَذَا أَجَلُهُ ، فَيَنِمُّ هُوَ كَذَلِكَ إِذْ جَاءَ الْخَطُّ الْأَقْرَبُ»

[رواه البخاري]

“This is man and this is his life term. While he is like this, the nearest line strikes him.” (*Sahih Al-Bukhârî*)

Mentioning death, even if it brings grief to your days and dissipates your dreams, will make you realize and remember an unequivocal fact.

Those who have short hopes and realize death before their eyes, will work for the Hereafter and use every moment of life in the obedience of Allâh. They will grieve for the time they spent without performing righteous deeds that bring them closer to Allâh. And on account of the good deeds they performed, they rejoice for the transfer to the Hereafter.

¹ *Hilyatul-Auliya' wa Tabaqatul-Asfiya'*, by Al-Hafiz Abu Nu'aim, vol. 2 p. 326

Khalid bin Ma'dân رحمه الله said:

“I do not prefer that any creation on land or in sea averts death from me with itself. Further, had death been a goal to reach, none will beat me to it on account of his physical strength.”¹

This good mannerism occurs when one has certain qualities: eagerness for a Paradise, its width is the width of heavens and earth, anticipation for the Meeting with Allâh, the Exalted and Ever-High, and joy for what one has brought forth of righteous, good deeds, all the while awaiting Allâh's rewards for the good deeds, after gaining His Mercy.

Even though the believers are eager to meet Allâh, the Exalted and Ever-High, and rejoice for what He has prepared for those who have faith in His Oneness, yet, as Hasan Basri رحمه الله stated:

“The soul of the son of Adam will depart this life with three sorrows: for not having his fill, for not reaching what he hoped for and for not preparing well for what he is going to face.”²

The grave is the second dwelling place after this life. How will that dwelling be if we ignored taking care of its building and brought down its pillars, especially since all what separates us from death, is for someone to declare, “So-and-so has died”? How many a loved one and a friend do we carry every day to the grave? Does death only knock on their doors and disturbs only their sleep, but not us?

Hasan Basri رحمه الله said:

“I have never seen a certainty closer to being doubted than people versus death. [They are certain it will strike them,] yet, they ignore its imminence. I have never seen truth that

¹ *'Hilyatul-Auliya'*, vol. 5 p. 210

² *Mukâshafatul-Qulûb*, p. 158

is closer to falsehood than that demonstrated by their statement, 'We seek Paradise,' yet, they ignore seeking its path."¹

Contemplate about this critical path, difficult road, unsteady bridge and uneasy hurdle on which the feet cannot remain firm. Wishful thinking cannot surmount this hurdle and only those whom Allâh makes their feet firm with the firm statement (*Lâ ilâha illallâh* (none has the right to be worshipped except Allâh) can remain on it, on a Day when all other feet will slip."²

Ammâr bin Yâsir رضى الله عنه said:

"Death is enough as a reminder, certainty is enough as wealth and performing acts of worship is sufficient as a job."³

Therefore, he who remembers death and fears losing time, the acts of worship will keep him busy in preparation for a sudden knock that will bring grief after delight and will not distinguish between a prince and a commoner, or an old man and a toddler. They are all the same in this regard, for whomever's time has come, then he is the companion of death, and those whose end has approached, then they are death's target.

Therefore, how long should our unawareness, that we spend its night in sleep and its days in moving about, how long should it continue? Ibrahim bin Ad-ham رحمه الله said:

"Our hearts were covered with three seals, and verily, the slave will not reach certainty [in Faith] until these seals are removed: delight in what is there, sorrow for what has been

¹ *Al-'Âqibah fi dhikrîl-Maut wal-Âkhirah*, by Imam Abdul-Haqq al-Ishbili, p. 95

² *Tasliyatu Ahlil-Masâ'ib*, by Imam abu Abdullâh, Muhammad bin Muhammad An-Nabaji, p. 233

³ *Jâmi' ul-'Uloom wal-Hikam*, by Ibn Rajab Al-'Hanbali, p. 353 and Az-Zuhd, p. 257

lost and rejoice by receiving praise. When you are delighted with what you have, you are a tightwad. If you grieve for what has been lost, then you are an outraged person, and such a person will taste the torment. If you rejoice when you are praised, then you are proud, and the proud will have their actions annulled.”¹

Furthermore, remembering death plants the seed of sincerity in the believer, with the good actions representing its fruit. This is especially important considering the fact that the days pass quickly and the stages of life end fast. Surely, he who makes this fact a reminder, will roll up his sleeves and revert to energetic activity, using his means of transportation -the righteous deeds- to transfer him to a Paradise as wide as the heavens and earth.

Silah bin Ashyam رحمه الله, once said:

“Let death be your slogan, for this way, you will not care if you reached the morning while wealthy or having difficulty in this life.”

Moreover, those who remember death will neither be overwhelmed by the afflictions of this life nor feel eagerness for life’s wealth, gold, furniture or beds. This is because this type knows that what Allâh has is far better and more lasting, and this knowledge encourages them to be energetic and to have a strong resolve. Life to this type does not make a difference, except the part of it that is spent in practicing good deeds that conform to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ, all the while avoiding showing off and seeking fame (with their good actions). Why would anyone show off and boast when there is an imminent destination (death) that awaits his coming?

Hârith bin Idris رحمه الله, said:

“I said to Dâwud At-Tâ’i, ‘Advise me,’ and he said, ‘Know

¹ *Al-'Ihyâ'*, vol. 4 p. 236

that soldiers of death are in wait for you.”¹

Ever since one departs his mother’s womb, the Angel of Death keeps in wait for him for a time when his life comes to an end, so that he can capture his soul. This is why ‘Aun bin Abdullâh said:

“He who counts tomorrow in his life term, will not have considered death its due consideration. Verily, how many persons start a day, but do not finish it, and how many persons hope for tomorrow, but do not live to reach it? If you contemplate about the end of life and its unpredictability, you will hate long hopes and the deceiving role they have.”²

Having long hopes is a reason behind laziness and weak resolves, prompting many to delay repentance until tomorrow, but they die before tomorrow comes. Also, there are many of us who often proclaim that after this, they will repent. However, death comes to them, before repentance occurs.

Abu Dardâ’ said, “He who remembers death often, then his delight becomes less and his enviousness (of others) diminishes.”³

This is because he who remembers the end and places its imminence before his eyes, will have no cause to rejoice or envy others, for he reminds himself of the horrors of death which will separate him from this earthly life. In this state, such persons will be like those described as, “I am a man who has stretched forth his neck with a sword held above it awaiting the order to cut it off.”⁴

We know this sword, for we witness it every day coming down on a loved one, a relative or a friend, thus, severing their ties

¹ *Sifatus-Safwah*, vol. 3 p. 141

² *Jami’ul-’Uloom wal-Hikam*, p. 465, *Sifwatus-Safwah*, vol. 3 p. 103 and *Sharhus-Sudûr*, p. 21

³ *Siyaru A’lami an-Nubalaa*, vol. 2 p. 353

⁴ *Al-’Ihyâ’*, vol. 4 p. 483

with this life and taking them away from their loved ones and companions. Allâh has given us respite with regards to our life term, but only to an appointed time that will never come early or late for even an instant.

Therefore, Dear Brother and Sister, you have been travelling since the moment you were brought into this life,

“And you do not know as you ensue on any mission, in which part of the earth your demise will be.” (poetry)

Have you prepared for your final destination and got ready for the journey thereafter? By Allâh, death is an imminent, tremendous incident and an awful matter, for which ‘Umar bin Abdul-Aziz said:

“Whoever considers the nearness of death in his heart, will see what he has and owns as being abundant.”¹

Preparing for such a journey, in which you will be alone without money, status, position, loved ones or friends, alone in your grave where even the closest and dearest ones to you will not provide company in your aloneness, is excellently fulfilled by performing righteous, good actions.

Bilal bin Sa’d used to say when he advised people, “O people of eternity and everlasting existence! You were not created to perish, you were created to remain forever. You will only be transferred from one dwelling (this life) to another (the Hereafter).”²

This transformation carries pain and hardships that only Allâh has knowledge of. Anas bin Mâlik رضى الله عنه said:

“Ever since Allâh created him, son of Adam did not taste a hardship more severe to him than death.”³

¹ *Shar’hu as-Sudur*, by As-Suyuti, p. 21

² *Shar’hu as-Sudur*, p. 12

³ *Shar’hu as-Sudur*, p. 34

It is because of these hardships that we seek flight in every direction and path (away from death). However, it is death; whichever valley you reside in, either you will go to it or it will come to you.

Dear Brother and Sister!

Do not be misled by health, strength, well-being, youth and the deceptive words of your companions. Death might strike you all of a sudden, even though you do not anticipate its coming to you soon, thinking that it is still far away, until its arrows strike and its agonies become due.

Abu Dardâ' رضى الله عنه said:

“I like poverty, in modesty to my Lord; I like death, in anticipation to my Lord; and I like illness, as an eraser for my sins.”¹

We think that happiness is tied to owning the abundant delights of this world. As for our righteous *Salaf*, let us contemplate what made them rejoice.

For instance, Masruq said:

“I never envied anyone as I envied a believer in his grave, he has acquired safety from Allâh’s torment and was comforted from the annoyance of this life.”²

Certainly, we are in the dwelling of trial and test, and we can only invoke Allâh to save us from all types of trials, both apparent and hidden, and to grant us firmness on His religion and working in His obedience. Certainly, the term of this life is only a few years, and those who live long past the stages of childhood and youth, will be given a warning through white hairs. The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said:

«مَنْ شَابَ شَيْبَةً فِي الْإِسْلَامِ كَانَتْ لَهُ نُورًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ»

¹ *Shar'hu as-Sudur*, p. 15

² *Shar'hu as-Sudur*, p. 17

“He who gets white hairs in Islam, they will be a light for him on the Day of Resurrection.”¹

Therefore, you, whom Allâh extends their life term until they see white hairs on the head and beard, should thank Allâh and return to Him with sincerity. Many of your generation have long died and were placed in their graves, while you have been given a respite by Allâh. You had the chance to pray, fast, invoke Allâh and seek His forgiveness until the present day. How many a righteous deed did you perform and sin that you sought forgiveness for during this time?

It is sufficient for you that this long time has been spent in performing good deeds that you will find as a reserve for you on the Day of Resurrection, if you did spend it this way. Sufyân Ath-Thauri used to say:

“In the morning, the [faithful] people thank Allâh for survival; and after death, they are thankful for their *Taqwa* (acts of obedience).”²

Life is just like a dream that passes as fast as clouds. It is a mere hour of time that soon fades away. It is a journey that has already started and will soon come to an abrupt end.

Khulaid Al-‘Asri said:

“We are all certain that death will come, yet we do not see those who are prepared for it. We are all certain of Paradise, yet, we do not see those who work to earn it. We are all certain of the Fire, yet we do not see those who are afraid from it. Therefore, what is it that you are waiting for? Death? Certainly, death is the first comer from Allâh that will bring you good or evil [news]. So brothers, take

¹ An authentic *Hadith* collected by *At-Tirmidhi* and *An-Nasa’i* from Ka’b bin Murrah.

² *Al-‘Ithâ’*, vol. 4. P. 435

the journey back to your Lord in a good manner.”¹

There is no doubt that remembering death and contemplating the end of those who were before us bring encouragement and strengthen the resolve.

The life of this world is a transient stage through which forefathers, parents and offspring have departed. The leaders and ministers have also departed from it, and none among those who remained will survive in it forever. Surely, all those who are walking on the earth will soon become placed under its surface, “Everything living is destined to perish, therefore, take sufficient provisions for the journey, for the stay is rather short. We live in an alien land, where every day, a generation passes away and a new one is created.”

Those who did not die during their childhood and youth, because Allâh extended their life term, will soon realize that their strength has turned into weakness, their fastness into slowness and their health to illnesses and pains. Therefore, be careful, you who ignore the imminence of death, for it is creeping towards you while you are unaware of it. Death might surprise you while you are in the best health and strength, but committing sins openly and ignoring the acts of obedience and worship.

Hasan Basri رحمه الله was asked:

“O Abu Sa‘îd! How are you?” He said, “Like he who awaits death when night falls, and in the morning, he does not know if he will live through the night or in which state (or condition) he will die.”

This is an eloquent answer and a good way to prepare. Ever since we were brought into this life, we knew that death awaits us in every area, but we tend to ignore this fact. Life is just like a day, and if we say to someone whose life span is but this one day, that there is an enemy who will attack him at any moment, he will

¹ *Sifatu as-Safwah*, vol. 3 p. 231

prepare for that enemy and await his surprise attack. This is life and this is death, so what have you prepared for its coming?

Mutarraf bin Abdullâh bin Ash-Shikhkhir said:

“Seek a delight that does not end by death! Death has spoiled the joy of the people of delight, a consequence of the knowledge that after death there will come a Day during which the excuse escapes one and the minds become bewildered. Surely, duly describing that Day will consume all pens and books.”¹

We hope that this advice falls on a responsive heart and that we go back to Allâh, for truly, Allâh becomes happy when the sinner comes back to Him in repentance.

Dear Brother and Sister!

Know that death is coming and that its danger is enormous. Also know that people have ignored death because they rarely talk about or mention it, and even those who mention death do so with an empty heart. Rather, their hearts are busy, but in the delights of this life, and this is why they do not feel fear when they mention death.

Therefore, the slave should empty his heart from all concerns, except mentioning death that is vigorously seeking him. He should be like one who is travelling headed towards a dangerous desert or in the sea, thinking and concerning himself only about his destination.²

Hameed said: “While Hasan Basri رحمه الله, was in the mosque, he took a deep breath and then said, ‘Had the hearts had life or righteousness in them, they would have made you weep of a night the day in its aftermath is the Day of Resurrection, during which the creations will see more naked bodies and weeping

¹ *Al-'Aqibah*, p. 26

² *Al-'Ihyâ*, vol. 4 p. 479

eyes than ever before.”¹

Abu Sa‘îd bin Abdur-Rahmân has explained the attitude of being busy and ignoring death, when he said:

“This life was constructed like this, mainly due to the shortcoming in the minds of its people!”²

If man stopped rushing after this life and thought about the grave and what comes after that, he would not feel delight in life, the various aspects of life would not be established or built and the marketplaces would not be erected. It is the mercy of Allâh that we sometimes forget death, but those who forget need to be reminded of it sometimes.

O People!

Work righteous deeds, beware of Allâh, the Exalted and Most-Honored, and neither be betrayed by long hopes nor forget the end of life. Do not recline to this life, for it deceives with its pleasures and anticipated future.

Life has beautified itself for those who seek its hand in marriage and became like the bride, to whom the eyes are staring, the hearts are directed and the souls are dedicating their love. How many a lover of this life has it destroyed? How many are those who rejoiced in it only to be betrayed soon after? Therefore, look at it with the eye of truth, for it is a dwelling that has many traps, and even its Creator has belittled it. The new of this life soon becomes old, its kinship quickly vanishes, its mighty becomes disgraced, its abundant becomes little, its affection dies out and its pleasures perish.

Therefore, wake up, may Allâh grant His Mercy to you, from your sleep and be alert from your slumber, before its is proclaimed that so-and-so (you) has become ill or his movement

¹ *Sifatu as-Safwah*, vol. 3 p. 234

² *Al-'Ihyâ'*, vol. 4 p. 282

has become heavy. Are there guides who lead to the cure and direct to the healer then? The doctors will be summoned for you, but they will render your recovery as unlikely. It will be then proclaimed that so-and-so has counted his wealth and wrote his will and testament. It will be said that his tongue has become heavy, and so, he does not speak to his brethren or know his neighbors. Then, your forehead will become sweaty and your sighs of pain continuous. You will feel certain that death is approaching; your eyelids will become heavy, your doubts will turn to certainty, your tongue will mumble and your brethren will weep for you. You will be told that this is your son and this is your brother, but you will not be able to speak, nor will your tongue be able to move. Then, the appointed destiny will overtake you and your soul will be detached from your limbs and ascended to heaven. Your brethren will now gather around you, your shroud will be brought forth and they will wash you and wrap you with the shroud. Those who used to visit you will cease to do so and those who envied you will put at rest their enviousness. Your family will direct their attention at your wealth, while you will be tied to your actions.¹

Beware of this end, Dear Brother and Sister!

What have we prepared for that day? Are we ready for that journey?

Here we are! We are being heralded every day that it is time to leave, so may Allâh grant His Mercy to those who stand up, obey and prepare for the day when they will leave this area forever.

Where are We, Dear Brother and Sister?

Where are we compared to what Sufyân Ath-Thauri described:

“I saw an old man in the mosque at Kufah (in Iraq) saying, ‘I have been praying in this mosque for thirty years and awaiting death to come to me. If it comes to me now, I

¹ *Al-'Ihyâ'*, vol. 3 p. 225

would not ask for or against anything, for verily, no one owes me anything nor do I owe anyone anything!”

However, we, except those whom Allâh has granted His Mercy, if death comes to us and we were given a respite, it will take us years to prepare ourselves and pay back our dues, all the while obeying Allâh as He should be obeyed. Mutarrif bin Abdullâh said:

“If I knew when my life would end, I fear that I would lose my mind. Allâh has granted His slaves the favor of forgetting death, otherwise, they would not enjoy life or erect marketplaces.”¹

We are in the life to perform righteous deeds, yet, we fall victim to laziness. When will we work then, after death, or in the grave? We still have time and a chance to seek and gain repentance and become active worshipping Allâh.

Yazid Ar-Raqqashi knew this fact and he used to say to himself, “O Yazid! Weep for your own self before you are wept on. O Yazid! Who will perform prayer on your behalf after you? Who will fast on your behalf? O Yazid! Who will invoke Allâh for you and supplicate to Him on your behalf (after you die)?”²

We said before that Mutarrif bin Abdullâh said,

“Death has spoiled the life of those who indulge in delight, so seek a delight (in Paradise) that does not end by death.”³

This trait is won by dedication in worshipping Allâh as He should be worshipped and sincerely returning to Him. Al-‘Alâ’ bin Ziyâd once said:

“One of you should consider that death has come to him, that he asked Allâh for respite and He gave him respite. So,

¹ *Sifatu as-Safwah*, vol. 3 p. 225

² *Sifatu as-Safwah*, vol. 3 p. 290

³ *Sifatu as-Safwah*, vol. 3 p. 224

let him use this time working in Allâh's obedience."¹

If we put ourselves in this situation and take this stance, our work will change and our intentions will become purer. We will come to grasp the enormity of the shortcoming that we fell into and continuously work righteousness in this life without becoming tired or bored. If we do this, we will be just like what Sufyân described, "Death brings relief to the worshipper."²

Look for the morrow and contemplate the nearness of your death and the fewness of your righteous deeds. A wise man once wrote to a man from his brethren, "Beware of death in this life, before you end up in a life that you would wish end in death, but will not."

Certainly, in that life (Hell), even death, with all its agonies and pains, will be sought but will not be met. Allâh, the Exalted said:

﴿وَنَادُوا بِمَلِكِهِ لِيَقْضِيَ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّكَ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ مَرْكُومُونَ﴾ [الزخرف: ٧٧]

"And they will weep: 'O Mâlik (Keeper of Hell)! Let your Lord make an end of us. He will say: 'Verily, you shall abide forever.' " (43:77)

In that life, there will be eternal residence either in Paradise, may Allâh make us among its people, or in the painful Fire, we seek refuge with Allâh from it.

﴿فَرِيقٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَفَرِيقٌ فِي السَّعِيرِ﴾ [الشورى: ٧]

"A party will be in Paradise (those who believed in Allâh and followed what Allâh's Messenger ﷺ brought them) and a party in the blazing Fire (Hell) (those who disbelieved in Allâh and followed not what Allâh's Messenger ﷺ brought them)." (42:7)

You spent your youth, health and life collecting wealth, which if you do not spend in a good deed, will be just like what Yahya bin Mu'âdh described:

¹ *Al-'Aqibah*, p. 90

² *Shar'hu as-Sudur*, p. 18

“There are two calamities, similar to which the earlier and latter generations never heard of, and they are both concerning the slave’s wealth upon his death.” He was asked, “What are they?” He said, “Wealth will all be taken from him [through inheritance], yet, he will be asked about it all!”¹

Abdullâh bin ‘Umar رضى الله عنهما was told that so-and-so from *Al-Ansâr* died and he said, “May Allâh grant him His Mercy.” They said, “He left behind a hundred thousand.” Abdullâh bin ‘Umar رضى الله عنهما commented, “But that money did not leave him. How can that money leave him when there is a Book [of Records] that does not leave a minor or a major deed, but records it?”

Those who seek Paradise will only reach it after death, even though death carries pains, horrors, agonies and fears. Ibn Abd Rabbihi said to Makhul, “Do you love Paradise?” Makhul said, “Who does not love it?” Ibn Abd Rabbihi said, “Then love death, because you will not see Paradise until you die.”²

The path to Allâh does not contain those who have doubts and obey lusts. It is full of those who have certainty and patience. They are like the flags (or signs) that show the way:

﴿ وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ آيَمَةً يَهْتَدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا لِمَا صَبَرُوا وَكَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يُوقِنُونَ ﴾

[السجدة: ٢٤]

“And We made from among them (Children of Israel), leaders, giving guidance under Our Command, when they were patient and used to believe with certainty in Our *Ayât* (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.).” (32:24)

One day, ‘Ali رضى الله عنه mounted the podium, praised Allâh and thanked Him and mentioned death, “O Allâh’s slaves! There is

¹ *Al-'Ihyâ'*, vol. 3 P. 248

² *Shar'hu as-Sudur*, p. 17

no escaping from death. If you stand in its path, it will take you, and if you run away from it, it will still take you. So seek safety fast, for there is a vigorous seeker pursuing you: the grave. Beware of its smallness, darkness and aloneness. Verily, the grave is either a hole of the Fire or a garden in Paradise. Verily, the grave speaks thrice each day and proclaims, 'I am the house of darkness. I am the house of worms. I am the house of aloneness.' Verily, what comes after that is a Day in which the baby gets white hairs and the adolescent becomes drunk:

﴿ وَتَضَعُ كُلُّ ذَاتِ حَمَلٍ حَمْلَهَا وَتَرَى النَّاسَ سُكَرَىٰ وَمَا هُمْ بِسُكَرَىٰ وَلَٰكِنَّ عَذَابَ اللَّهِ شَدِيدٌ ﴾ [الحج: ٢]

"...and every pregnant one will drop her load, and you shall see mankind as in a drunken state, yet they will not be drunken, but severe will be the Torment of Allâh." (22:2)

Verily, what comes after that is even more severe: a Fire whose heat is intense and whose bottom is far down. Its adornments are iron bars [with pointed heads, used for punishment], its water is puss and its keeper is (Angel) Mâlik, who does not have mercy in him. He then wept and the Muslims around him wept. 'Ali رضي الله عنه said next, "Verily, there is also a Paradise, as wide as the heavens and earth, prepared for the pious. We invoke Allâh to make us and you among the pious and save us and you from the painful torment."¹

When will we repent, dear Brother and Sister, and have you ever asked yourself this question?

Bilâl bin Sa'd رحمه الله said:

"One of us would be asked, 'Do you want to die?' He would say, 'No.' He would be asked, 'Why not?' He would say, 'So that I repent and perform righteous deeds.' He would be told, 'Then perform good deeds.' He would

¹ *Al-Bidayah wan-Nihayah*, vol. 7 p. 149

reply, 'I shall do that,' so he would neither like to die, nor would perform good deeds. He would delay working for Allâh's sake, but would not delay the works of this life."¹

'Utbah was once given an advice:

"Remember death often, for if you had abundant wealth, it will make it seem little, and if you have little wealth, it will make it seem substantial."²

It is a fact that the most pressing concerns for any one of us in this life and its adornments. Rarely do we see those who grieve because they missed the prayer in congregation or did not perform a certain act of worship. Rather, this life has become the commonly shared concern for most people.

Once, a wise man declared:

"O people! The decision has been passed, death is near and life term has reached its conclusion. How many are they who feel sorry for loss of life and fell pity? Certainly, the imminence of the fading away of life shortens the hopes of the wise, strengthens the resolve of the bright and brings tears to the eyes of the aggrieved. May Allâh grant His mercy to a person who cries for his own self, for none except him will truly weep for him, and concerns himself about his own self, for none except him will do so. Thus, this person would work, become aright, contemplate and return (to Allâh)."

Are we contemplating our affairs and destination, just as the *Salaf* used to contemplate and work for their destination?

What truly comes behind all this good behavior, is contained in Allâh's Statement:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلَتَنْظُرَنَّ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ

¹ *Al-'Aqibah*, p 91

² *Al-'Aqibah*, p 40

“O you who believe! Fear Allâh and keep your duty to Him. And let every person look to what he has sent forth for the morrow, and fear Allâh. Verily, Allâh is All-Aware of what you do.” (59:18)

Hassân رضى الله عنه asked his mother, “O my mother! Do you like to meet Allâh the Exalted now?” She said, “No, for I have disobeyed Him.”

Also, Ar-Rabi‘ bin Khuthaim said “Remember that (death) which you have never tasted before and will only taste once.”¹

Moreover, Hasan Basri رحمه الله encouraged us, saying, “O son of Adam! Sell your current life for your latter life, and you will win both. Do not sell your latter life for this life, for you will lose them both. The period of stay is short, and the righteous ones went away before you, so what are you waiting for? Do you wait your turn? By Allâh, it is about to come, and then the latter ones will join the former ones among you.”²

Think now about the fear that will overcome your heart when you see the *Sirât*³ and realize its thinness. Then, your sight will fall on the darkness of *Jahannam* (Hellfire) under the *Sirât*, then your hearing will pick up the sound of the Fire’s flames. You will be required to pass over the *Sirât*, even though you are weak and your heart is shaking. Your feet will tremble and your back will feel the burden of your evil deeds.⁴

O Allâh! Make us among those on whom You bestowed Your Favor: the Prophets, the Truthful, the martyrs and the righteous

¹ *Hilyatu Al-Auliya*, vol. 2 p. 114

² *At-Tabsirah*, vol. 1 p. 368

³ *As-Sirât*: the bridge over the Fire that everyone must pass to enter Paradise. The sinners and disbelievers will fall in the Fire where only the disbelievers will remain for eternity.

⁴ *At-Tathkirah*, p. 385

believers, and what an excellent company. O Allâh! Make us among the inheritors of the Garden of Delight, along with our fathers, mothers and offspring, and forbid our faces for the Fire.

Hasan Basri رَحِمَهُ اللهُ said, "If it were not for three, son of Adam would not have lowered his head: death, illness and poverty. Other than that, however, he is proud."¹

This is death, which Allâh made the end of all living souls. It is a sign from Allâh that testifies to His Power, Might and Ability. All thanks and praises are due to Allâh Who made death the breaker of the necks of the tyrants and kings and shortened the hopes of the Caesars, whose hearts turned away from death until the truth came to them. When death struck them, it threw them in the hole and they were transferred from castles to graves and from the light of life to the darkness of the grave.²

O Allâh! Make our last deeds the best of our deeds, and our best day when we meet you. O Allâh! We seek refuge with You from the lures and confusion that Satan throws on the dying person.

¹ *Al-Hasan Al-Basri*, p. 41

² *Al-'Ihyâ'*, vol. 4 p. 475

Prophetic Practice Concerning Funerals

Our Prophet's guidance with regards to funerals was the perfect guidance, different from the practices of all other nations, involving kindness towards the dead person, bringing about his benefit in the grave and on the Day of Return, as well as, kindness towards his family. Moreover, the Prophet's guidance in this regard ensures one's slavery to Allâh Alone in all that pertains to the deceased and practiced by the living.

The Prophet's guidance with regards to establishing the slavery to the Lord, Exalted and Honored He is, was most perfect in kindness to the deceased, such as preparing the funeral in the best manner for the journey to Allâh. The Prophet ﷺ and his Companions stood in lines [in the *Janâzah* (funeral) prayer] praising Allâh and invoking Him for forgiveness, mercy and pardon for the dead. Next, they accompanied the deceased, until he or she was laid in the grave. Then, the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions stood before the grave of the deceased invoking Allâh to make his feet firm, when he needs firmness the most. The Prophet ﷺ and his Companions often visited the graveyard, greeted the dead with *Salâm* and invoked Allâh for them, just as friends visit each other in this life.

This concern would start when a person falls gravely ill, and the Prophet ﷺ would visit him, remind him of the Hereafter, command him to make a will and testament and recommend him to repent [to Allâh]. Those who are present when the person is dying, were commanded to ask him to pronounce *Lâ ilâha illallâh* [there is no true God to be worship except Allâh], so that this Testimony becomes the last that he speaks. The Prophet ﷺ also prohibited the practices of nations that do not believe in Resurrection, such as striking the face, tearing clothes, shaving heads, loud weeping, and so forth.

The Prophet ﷺ legislated observing silence while attending the

dead, weeping without loudness and feeling sadness in the heart. The Prophet ﷺ practiced this *Sunnah* himself, such as when he said [when his beloved son Ibrâhim died]:

«تَدْمَعُ الْعَيْنُ وَيَحْزَنُ الْقَلْبُ، وَلَا نَقُولُ إِلَّا مَا يُرِضِي الرَّبَّ».

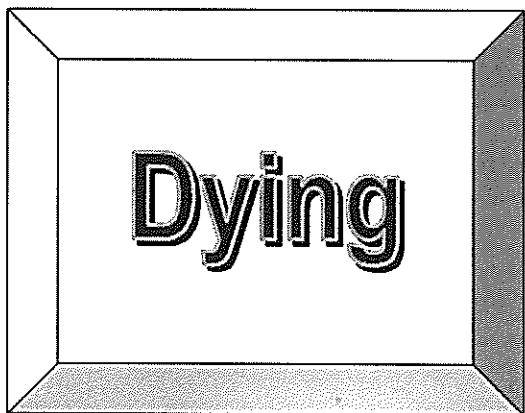
“The eye is tearful and the heart is sad, but we only say what pleases the Lord.”¹

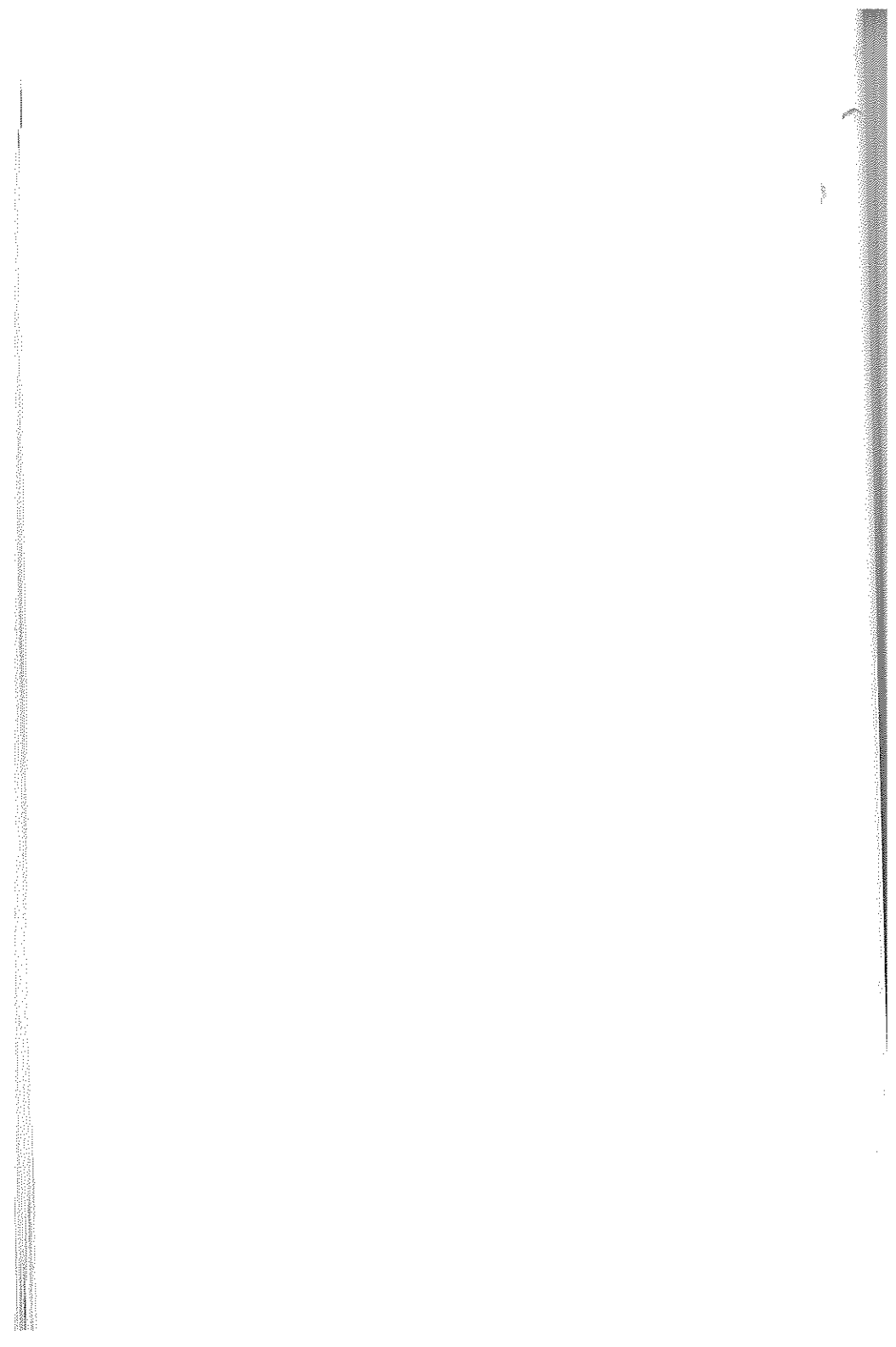
The Prophet ﷺ legislated for his *Ummah* [Muslim nation] thanking Allâh, asserting that all will be returned to Him [by saying: *Inna lillâhi wa Inna ilaihi Râji'ûn*] and being pleased with Allâh's Decision. This, by no means, contradicts having tearful eyes and a sad heart. Certainly, the Prophet ﷺ was the most pleased creation with Allâh concerning His Decision and the most praising of Him.²

¹ Collected by Muslim, *Abu Dâwud* and *Ahmad* from Anas رضى الله عنه.

² Refer to *Zâd-ul-Ma'âd min Hadyi Khairi Al-'Ibad*, by Ibn Al-Qayyim, vol. 1 p. 498 and thereafter.

Second Step:





Dying

Allâh the Exalted said in the most truthful description and eloquent expression:

﴿وَجَاءَت سَكْرَةُ الْمَوْتِ بِالْحَقِّ ذَلِكَ مَا كُنْتَ مِنْهُ تَحِيدُ ۝ وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ ذَلِكَ يَوْمَ الْوَعِيدِ﴾

[ق: ١٩، ٢٠]

“And the stupor of death will come in truth: ‘This is what you have been avoiding!’ And the Trumpet will be blown that will be the Day whereof warning (had been given) (i.e., the Day of Resurrection).” (50:19,20)

What do you know about the coming of the stupor of death, from which there is no escape, nor can any ploy or trick avert it? It signals the beginning of your end in the life of this world and the introduction to the Hereafter, leaving behind your wealth, luxurious dwellings and family.

By Allâh! It is a horrifying moment that carries tremendous hardships. Whatever comes afterwards is either a promise of good or a warning of evil. If you think about the coming of death while enjoying a comfort and pleasure, it will spoil your life and belittle it and its great delights in your eyes. Your delight will then turn to sadness and your happiness to misery. And why not, since death involves departing from wealth, offspring, loved ones and friends to a life that only contains recompense and involves horrors, besides which all horrors become minor? After that, you will end up with one of the two groups:

﴿فَرِيقٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَفَرِيقٌ فِي السَّعِيرِ﴾ [الشورى: ٧]

“A party will be in Paradise and a party in the blazing Fire.” (42:7)

For instance, the best of all Prophets and Messengers, felt the agonies of death so deeply that he said, while wetting his hand with water and wiping his head with it:

«لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، إِنْ لِمَوْتِ سَكَرَاتٍ».

“There is no god besides Allâh, death has its stupor.”¹

Also, when Fâtimah رضى الله عنها saw the hardship her father, the Prophet ﷺ, was suffering while dying, she said, “What hardship my father is suffering!” He answered her, “After this day, your father will never suffer any hardship!”²

This is why we invoke Allâh:

“O Allâh! Make the agonies of death easy on us, when death comes. Make us firm during that moment, when the tongue becomes heavy, the eyes closed and the shrouds being prepared. Afterwards, take us to Paradise with Your Mercy.”

The Prophet ﷺ was reported to have said:

«مَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ يَمُوتُ إِلَّا نَدِمَ، إِنْ كَانَ مُحْسِنًا نَدِمَ أَنْ لَا يَكُونُ أَزْدَادًا، وَإِنْ كَانَ مُسِيئًا نَدِمَ أَنْ لَا يَكُونُ نَزْعًا».

“Every person who dies will feel sorry. If the deceased was a good doer, he will be sorry he did not perform more good, and if he was an evil doer, he will feel sorry he did not desist evil.”³

This life is the farm for the Hereafter, and surely, those who do good, will wish they could do more good, so as to earn more grades and status with Allâh. As for those who do evil, they will feel sorrow for ignoring repentance and going back to Allâh with sins and evil actions from which they did not repent. Death has certainly surprised this type before they could repent.

This is why Hasan Basri رحمه الله said, “Death has exposed the

¹ Collected by Al-Bukhâri and Imam Ahmad from ‘Âishah رضى الله عنها.

² Collected by Al-Bukhâri from Anas رضى الله عنه.

³ Collected by At-Tirmidhi from Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه, but this *Hadith*'s chain of narration is weak.

reality of this life and did not leave delight to be felt by those who have sound minds.”¹

Certainly, death did not leave a way out for those who seek to escape from it, nor a ploy to use by those who seek to cheat it.

Dear Brother and Sister!

Know that if the slave will not taste any hardship, horror and pain other than the agonies and stupor of death, it will be sufficient that his life be spoiled and its delight cut short. In this case, forgetfulness and heedlessness should and must depart the slave. He should think deeply about death and vigorously prepare for its coming.²

How is it then if we knew that after death comes the grave with its darkness, the *Sirât* with its thinness and the recompense with its stringency? These are afflictions after afflictions, and the final destination afterwards is either to Paradise or to Hellfire:

﴿ كَلَّا إِذَا بَلَغَتِ النَّارَاقِي ۖ وَقِيلَ مَنْ رَاقِي ۖ وَظَنَّ أَنَّهُ الْفِرَاقُ ۖ وَاللَّفَّتِ السَّاقِي بِالسَّاقِي ۖ إِلَىٰ رَيْكٍ ۖ

يَوْمَئِذٍ الْمَسَاقِي ۖ ﴾ [القيامة: ٢٦-٣٠]

“Nay, when (the soul) reaches to the collarbone (i.e., up to the throat in its exit). And it will be said: ‘Who can cure him (and save him from death)?’ And he (the dying person) will conclude that it was (the time) of parting (death). And one leg will be joined with another leg (shrouded). The drive will be on that Day to your Lord (Allâh)!” (75:26-30)

It is the scene of death that puts an end to the life of every living soul. None can resist death for himself or for others. It is death that separates the loved ones and goes its way unabated. It neither stops to answer the call of the distressed nor the pain of departure nor the fear of the frightened. It is death that brings

¹ *Al-'Ihyâ'*, vol. 4 p. 479 and *As-Siyar*, by Ath-Thahabi, vol. 4 p. 585

² *Al-'Ihyâ'*, vol. 4 p. 490

down the tyrants and both the oppressor and the oppressed. It is death before which mankind can do nothing, yet, they do not contemplate the irresistible power behind it. When the soul reaches the throat at the time of death, the indescribable agonies of death keep coming, causing the eyes to stare; those around the dying person will gather closer to him seeking a way to save him from his agony:

﴿وَقِيلَ مَنْ رَاقٍ﴾ [القيامة: ٢٧]

“And it will be said: ‘Who can cure him?’ ”

is there a remedy that could save the dying person from the agonies and stupor of death?:

﴿وَالْفَخَّ السَّاقُ بِالسَّاقِ﴾ [القيامة: ٢٩]

“And one leg will be joined with another leg,”

and this is when every trick and every remedy fails to work. Then, the path will become clear, the path to which all living souls race:

﴿إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْمَسَاقُ﴾ [القيامة: ٣٠]

“The drive will be on that Day to your Lord (Allâh)!”¹

It was reported that the Angel of Death came to Prophet Dâwud (David) عليه السلام, who asked, “Who are you?” He said, “I am he who fears not kings, nor can be stopped by castles, nor will accept bribes.” Dâwud عليه السلام said, “You are the Angel of Death!” He said, “Yes.” Dâwud عليه السلام said, “You came before I prepared for you?” He said, “O Dâwud! Where is so-and-so, your relative, and so-and-so, your neighbor?” He said, “They died.” The Angel of Death said, “Has not their death given you a lesson to prepare?”²

¹ *At-Tathkirah fi Al-Isti'dadi liyaumi Al-Akhirah*, by ‘Ali Sali‘h Al-Hazza,’ p. 12

² *At-Tathkirah*, p. 48

By Allâh! This should give us a lesson, for our parents and offspring depart from us and we witness how they are laid in the ground. Yet, we neither think about what we will face nor the path we are going to cross nor the road we are going to take.

Hasan Basri رحمه الله wept when he was dying and said:

“A weak soul, but a tremendous calamity to come. Certainly, we are all for Allâh and to Him shall be our return.”

If you consider that death is at your door and that the Angel of Death is seeking you, you will realize the enormity of that which is coming and feel fear and horror. If this is the case while still alive, what about when death actually comes, and it will certainly come.

It was reported that Abu Wahb, who was famous as the *Zâhid* (ascetic) of Al-Andalus (Andalusia) [when Spain was under Arab control], sold his furniture before he died. When he was asked why, he said, “I want to travel (meant death),” and he died a few days later.¹

In this life, man is a traveler, from the time he comes into this world. One day, he is bound to settle down, whether that day comes sooner or later.

Ibn ‘Abbas رضي الله عنهما narrated that ‘Umar رضي الله عنه came to the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ, who was reclining on a woven mat that left its marks on his side. ‘Umar رضي الله عنه said, “Why not get a more comfortable mat than this one, O Allâh’s Prophet?” The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said:

«مَا لِي وَلِلدُّنْيَا؟ مَا مَثَلِي وَمَثَلُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا كَرَآكِبٍ سَارَ فِي يَوْمٍ صَائِفٍ، فَاسْتَظَلَّ تَحْتَ شَجَرَةٍ مِنْ نَهَارٍ، ثُمَّ رَاحَ وَتَرَكَهَا».

“What do I have to do with this life? Verily, my example in this life is the example of a traveler who went on a journey during a summer day, took shelter under a tree during a

¹ *As-Siyar*, vol. 15 p. 507

part of a day, then went on and left it.”¹

Where are we today compared to this honorable *Hadith*? We use luxurious furniture that makes our hearts hard and causes us to forget death and its afflictions.

Hasan Basri رحمه الله said, “If son of Adam knew that death carries comfort and relief for him, it will still be hard for him to die, because of the agonies, hardships and afflictions that accompany death. So what about when he knows nothing about what death is carrying for him, whether eternal delight or everlasting torment?”

Hasan Basri رحمه الله also said, “He who did not die all of a sudden, will get ill all of a sudden. Therefore, fear Allâh and beware of His surprises for you.”²

Where are our peers? By Allâh! Many of them have died and perished. Further, the opponents have been gathered in the ground which they now share; the rope of hope has betrayed them after they held its end. They all are being asked about what they left behind, and their best hope has concentrated on being left alone.³

When Abu Bakr رضى الله عنه was dying, his daughter ‘Āishah رضى الله عنها recited this poem:

“Carefulness avails not man on the day when his soul reaches the throat and fills the chest.”

Abu Bakr رضى الله عنه said to her, “Do not say this, O daughter, and say instead:

﴿وَجَاءَتْ سَكْرَةُ الْمَوْتِ بِالْحَقِّ ذَلِكَ مَا كُنْتَ مِنْهُ تَحِيدُ﴾ [ق: ١٩]

“And the stupor of death will come in truth: ‘This is what

¹ An authentic *Hadith* collected by Ahmad and Al-Hâkim from Ibn ‘Abbâs رضى الله عنهما.

² *Hasan Basri*, p. 105

³ *At-Tathkirah fi al-Isti'dadi liyaumi al-Akhirah*, by ‘Ali Salih al-Hazza’, p. 89

you have been avoiding!’ ” (50:19)

He then said:

“Wash these two garments of mine and use them as shroud to cover me with. Surely, living persons have more right to new garments than dead persons.”¹

To gain knowledge in the description of death, which agonies are only known to those who suffer from them, we should hear Ka‘b’s description of it when ‘Umar رضى الله عنه asked him to describe death, “O Leader of the Faithful! It is like a tree with many thorns inside of the son of Adam, encompassing all of his veins and limbs. He (Angel of Death) is like a man with strong hands and he is pulling this tree out.” ‘Umar رضى الله عنه wept.

Wahb bin Munabbbeh said:

“There was a king who wanted to travel to a land, and he ordered that he be brought clothes to wear for the journey. He did not like the clothes he was brought and asked for other clothes, until he was brought what he liked and changed into them. He also asked that he be brought an animal to ride, but he did not like the animal he was brought and was brought other animals; he rode the best one among them. Satan came to him and blew pride in his nose, and the king responded positively. The king proceeded in a royal procession of horses, and he did not even look at his subjects, out of pride. A man with modest clothes came to him and greeted him, but the king did not reply. That man held the rope of the king’s horse, prompting the king to order him, ‘Release the bridle. You have done a grave thing.’ The man said, ‘I have a need from you.’ The king said, ‘Wait until I get down.’ The man said, ‘No, right now,’ and kept his grip on the bridle of the king’s horse, until the king said, ‘Mention your need.’ The

¹ *Az-Zuhd*, p. 163

man said, 'It is a secret.' So the king lowered down his head and that man told him the secret, 'I am the Angel of Death,' and the king's face changed color and his tongue began to tremble. He said, 'Let me go back to my family, so that I do some things and say good bye to them.' The Angel of Death said, 'No, by Allâh! You will never see your family or estates again.' So he captured the king's soul, and the king fell like a brick.

The Angel of Death went along, met a believing slave and greeted him with *Salâm*, and he returned the greeting. He said to that man, 'I have a need that I would like to mention in confidence to you.' He said, 'Mention it', and he said to him, 'I am the Angel of Death.' The believer said, 'Welcome for he whose absence was long. By Allâh, no absentee on this earth is dearer to me to meet than you.' The Angel of Death asked him, 'Finish the job that you went out to fulfil.' He said, 'I have no desire more beloved to me than meeting Allâh the Exalted.' He said, 'Then choose in which state you want me to capture your soul.' He asked him, 'Can you do that?' The Angel of Death said, 'Yes, for I was ordered to do that.' The believer said, 'Let me perform ablution and pray, and you capture my soul while I am in the state of prostration.' So Angel of Death captured the believer's soul while he was in prostration."¹

Let us also examine the importance the *Salaf* used to place on time, as well as, putting it to best use. When 'Âmir bin Abdullâh was dying, he wept and said, "In preparation for this moment, let those who want to work rush to work. O Allâh! I seek Your forgiveness for my shortcomings and errors. I repent to you from all of my sins, there is no deity worthy of worship except Allâh." He kept repeating these words until he died, may Allâh grant him His Mercy.

Certainly, as Mutarrif bin Abdullâh رَحِمَهُ اللهُ said:

¹ *Al-'Ihyâ'*, vol. 4 p. 496

“Death has spoiled life for people of delight, so seek a delight that does not end by death.”¹

Certainly, everything except Allâh perishes and every delight will surely end, except the delight of Paradise. May Allâh make us all among its people, who will never grieve or become afraid. (poetry)

Safwân bin Saleem said, “Death carries relief to the believer from the afflictions of this life, even though death has its agonies and calamities,” his eyes then became tearful.²

Let us contemplate about our ancestors’ grief in departing this life, because of the fact that it is the dwelling where they can perform righteous, good deeds. For instance, one of the worshippers of Allâh wept when he was dying and was asked, “What makes you weep?” He said, “That those who fast do so without me, that those who remember Allâh do so without me and that those who pray do so without me.”

The days of your life are numbered, containing a precise number of moments and breaths. If you pay the wealth of the entire earth in return for an increase in your life for even a few moments, you will not be able to have what you wish. Therefore, why do you waste the moments of your life now in anything other than the obedience of Allâh?

Abu Hâzim said:

“Trade of the Hereafter is not sought after, and whatever is left of it, is about to finish! As a result, no part of it, minor or major, will remain.

Moreover, if one is prevented from doing good actions, all what he has left is sorrow and grief for this loss, wishing he could go back to a condition that allows him to work good

¹ *As-Siyar*, vol. 4 p. 19

² *As-Siyar*, vol. 5 p. 366

deeds, but wishing that will not avail him.”¹

We waste the time of our life in what does not benefit us, even feeling elated and delighted that we are doing so!

Once, Hasan Basri رحمه الله passed by a man who was laughing and asked him, “O my nephew! Have you safely passed over the *Sirât*?” He said, “No.” Hasan Basri رحمه الله asked, “Have you received news that you will end up in Paradise or Hell?” He said, “No.” Hasan Basri رحمه الله asked him, “Why do you laugh then, may Allâh save you, while the matter ahead is horrifying?” That man was never seen laughing until he died.²

It is because lusts, desires and turning away from the Hereafter have become prevalent that we give this advice:

‘Umar رضى الله عنه used to say repeatedly, “Remember the Fire often, for its heat is intense, its bottom is far down and its bars (of torment) are made of iron.”³

Further, just before Fudail¹ bin ‘Iyâd رحمه الله died, he lost consciousness. When he regained consciousness, he said, “How far is my journey and little is the provision I have.”⁴

Indeed, is there a journey longer than the journey of death? What type of provisions is necessary for this journey?

﴿وَتَكَزُّوْهُ وَأَفْبَاتُ حَيْثُ الرَّادِ النَّقْوَى﴾ [البقرة: 197]

“And take a provision (with you) for the journey, but the best provision is *At-Taqwa* (piety, righteousness).” (2:197)

Since we are still alive, we do not know the true pain and hardship of death. However, each one of us will pass through these difficult moments and horrifying minutes, when breath will

¹ *Jami'u Al-'Uloomi wal-'Hikam*, by bin Rajab, p. 468

² But he smiled to people, as this is a part of the *Sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ for which the Muslim earns a charity [Refer to *Al-Hasan Al-Basri*, p. 89

³ *Al-Hasan Al-Basri*, p. 108

⁴ *Al-'Aqibah*, p. 133

be taken aback and eyes wander around in confusion; this is when the moment of death approaches.

What thoughts would be crossing your mind if you open your eyes and find the Angel of Death standing beside your head? What thoughts do you have now, when you still have not tasted the agonies, pain, hardships and afflictions that accompany death?

When 'Amr bin 'Âs was dying, his son asked him about what he felt at that time and 'Amr replied:

“By Allâh! It is as if my side is being collected in a box (used to keep clothes), breathing through the tip of a needle, and as if my feet are being pulled to my head with a branch of thorns.”¹

This is how difficult death is, and the thought you will have when it comes, will concentrate on which doors you will enter from, which of the two dwellings you will reside in and which home will be your home.

Muhammad bin Wâsi' said:

“My brothers! Do you know where I will be taken? By Allâh, other than Whom there is no god, I will be taken to the Fire, or Allâh will pardon me.”²

Also, Jâbir bin Zaid was asked upon his death, “What do you wish for?” He said, “To see Hasan Basri.” When Hasan Basri رحمه الله came, Jâbir said, “My brothers, I will now depart from you, either to Paradise or to the Fire.”

He has said the truth, for there are only two paths, one leading to Paradise and the other to the Fire:

﴿ فَمَنْ رُحِّجَ عَنِ النَّارِ وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ ﴾ [آل عمران: ١٨٥]

“And whoever is removed away from the Fire and admitted

¹ *Jami'u al-'Uloomi wal-'Hikam*, p. 449

² *Sifatul as-Safwah*, vol. 3 p. 271

to Paradise, he indeed is successful.” (3:185)

Abdullâh bin Abdul-Aziz Al-‘Umari said when he was dying, “I will declare the Favor of my Lord: I still have seven Dirhams. I will declare the Favor of my Lord: If this life is brought under my feet and all what I have to do to earn it is to remove my feet from above it, I will not do so.”¹

This is how this precious life, which man seeks vigorously, becomes when death approaches.

Describing what comes after death lessens the hardship of death and the pain that comes with it, especially the part when one is asked about his religion (by angels *Munkir* and *Nakir*). Sufyân Ath-Thauri concurred, “There is no stance harder to me than the stupor of death, for I fear that it will be so hard on me that I invoke it to be made easier, but when my request is turned down, I succumb to *Fitnah* (trials and lures of Satan just before death).”²

Muhammad bin Wâsi‘ gave us sincere advice that came from the heart, and this advice is useful in a difficult time and a hard stance. Muhammad bin Abdullâh said, “We visited Muhammad bin Wâsi‘ when he was dying and he said, ‘My brothers! My brothers! Consider that I and you invoked Allâh to be returned to this life, yet I was denied but you were given respite. Therefore, do not lose yourselves.’”³

Let us imagine that Allâh has given us respite, as Muhammad bin Wâsi‘ suggested; and indeed, many among us were saved from accidents, illnesses, and so forth. Therefore, let us use this respite and go back to Allâh, before we see death and ask for a respite, but it will not be granted.

Abdul-Mâlik bin Marwân said in the illness that preceded his death, “Raise my head,” and his head was raised. He then took a

¹ *Ath-Thabatu ‘Inda al-‘Mamat*, p. 153

² *Sifatuas-Safwah*, vol. 3 p. 148

³ *Sifatuas-Safwah*, vol. 3 p. 271 and *Ath-Thabatu ‘Inda al-‘Mamat*, p. 146

breath and said, "O life, how delightful you are! Verily, your long is short and your abundant is minute; we were deceived by you."¹

Therefore, work hard and rush as in a race, for you were caught up with. Think little of the lusts you covet and do not forget what you were created for. The days have passed, but you have not performed acts of obedience during them. The errors were recorded and you did not heed the warnings. Soon, if you remain like this, the truthful ones will arrive safely while you will have your journey disrupted. This admonishment is for you, so, do you hear and comprehend it?

How many are they who lived in this life before you, only to see death hovering around their homes then striking them and their neighbors? Life is short, and much of it has passed while you delay repentance, all the while preempting the rest of it with false interpretation (or hopes). Now, the time has come for the guest to leave.²

Death has struck fear in our hearts because it has taken away many from among us, yet, we feel safe, even though we know for certainty that our turn will soon come?

Luqmân said to his son, "My son! Prepare for a matter that will strike all of a sudden, before it surprises you with attack."³

Think, O deceived one, about the agonies of death and the horrors that accompany it. Certainly, death is a true promise and a just judge that brings grief to the heart and tears to the eyes. It separates groups and puts an end to lusts, hopes and wishes.

O son of Adam! Have you thought about the day when you will perish and move from this life, from vastness to smallness, when your friend, companion, brother and relative will leave you alone? This is when you will be taken from your bed and covers

¹ *Al-Bidayah wan-Nihayah*, by bin Kathir, vol. 9 p. 75

² *At-Tathkirah fi al-Isti'dadi liyaumi al-Akhirah*, p. 91

³ *Al-'Aqibah*, p. 92

to nakedness, when you will use sand and dirt as a sheet instead of your comfortable blanket. O you who collects money and erects buildings, all what you will end up with is the shroud. The things you collected and built will go away and your body will be left exposed to dirt and your final destination. Where will the wealth you collected be at that time? Will it avail you against the horrors to come? Rather, you will leave your wealth to those who might not thank you for it, while you will bring forth your sins to He Who might not accept your excuse.¹

It was said that Prophet Ya'qub (Jacob) عليه السلام said to the Angel of Death, "I need something from you," and the Angel of Death asked him what he wanted. Ya'qub عليه السلام said, "That you inform me when my term comes to an end, when the time comes that you capture my soul." The Angel of Death said, "I will send two or three emissaries to you." When Ya'qub's term came to its expiration date, the Angel of Death came to Ya'qub عليه السلام, who asked, "Have you come to visit or to capture my soul?" He said, "To capture your soul." Ya'qub عليه السلام said, "Did you not tell me that you will send two or three emissaries?" The Angel of Death answered him, "Yes, and I did; the white hairs you have that used to be black, the weakness in your body after it was strong and your back becoming bent after it was straight. These are my emissaries, O Ya'qub, to the children of Adam, before death."²

However, this is not the rule, for how many infants, or young persons who had reached their prime, have been taken away by death? Do we not see that the majority of the residents of the graves are young people and infants?

There is good advice that is suitable for all ages and should be used to build one's home in the Garden of Eternity. Abu Hâzim

¹ *At-Tathkirah*, p. 10

² *Irshadu Al-'Ibad lil-Isti'dadi li-Yaumi Al-Ma'ad*, by Abdul Aziz As-Salman, p. 7

Salamah bin Dinâr said:

“Abandon every matter because of which you hate to meet death, for this way, it will not make a difference to you if you die anytime.”¹

Moreover, Maimun bin Mehrân said, “He who wishes to know his grade with Allâh, the Exalted and the Most Honored, should examine his actions, for he will certainly come to meet his actions no matter who he is.”²

One of Allâh’s Statements collects all these meanings:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْتَنْظُرَ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ

بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ﴾ [الحشر: ١٨]

“O you who believe! Fear Allâh and keep your duty to Him. And let every person look to what he has sent forth for the morrow, and fear Allâh. Verily, Allâh is All-Aware of what you do.” (59:18)

We present to you these true statements that came from the heart, from Abu Dardâ’ رضي الله عنه when he was dying, “Let man work for a demise like mine! Let man work for an hour like this! Let man work for a day like this!” and he wept. His wife asked him, “Do you weep, even though you have accompanied the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ?” He said:

“Why should not I weep, when I do not know which of my sins will bring about my destruction?”

Are there those who would heed to this sincere advice that should shake the heart of every Muslim and remind him of the awful moments to come?

When some people visited ‘Atâ’ As-Sulami as he was dying, they asked him, “How do you feel?” He replied, “Death is in my throat,

¹ *Tathkiratu al-‘Huffath*, by ath-Thahabi, vol. 1 p. 133

² *Hilyatu Al-Auliyyaa*, vol. 4 p. 84

the grave is before me, Resurrection will be my stand, the *Sirât* over the Fire will be my path, and I do not know what will be done to me." He then wept, until he fainted. When he woke up, he said, "O Allâh, have mercy on me and comfort me upon death and in the grave. Have mercy on me upon my stand before Your Hands, and You are the Most Merciful of those who have mercy."

Furthermore, a man accompanying 'Umar رضى الله عنه to Makkah died on the way, and 'Umar رضى الله عنه stayed in that area until he prayed the *Janâzah* for him and buried him. Ever since that happened, 'Umar رضى الله عنه often repeated this poem:

"There are those who achieve more than they hoped for, and those who are taken away before accomplishing what they aspired."¹

Woe to you, O inner self! Do you not fear a time when you will reach the throat and witness the messengers of your Lord appearing in the worst colors, with awful faces and bringing the glad tidings of torment? Will sorrow avail you at that time? Will sadness be accepted from you? Will weeping at that time earn you Allâh's Mercy? It is amazing that you claim to see aright and to be smart, yet, you rejoice when your wealth increases, but do not grieve for shortening of your life term. What good does increased wealth do when life is ever becoming shorter?²

It is death, the end of all living souls, none will ever escape it, nor will it ever be beaten in a race.³

When Caliph Abu Ja'far Al-Mansur was dying, he said to Ar-Rabi', "O Rabi'! This (Allâh's) is the true Kingship, not the kingship of someone who dies."⁴

Also, when Caliph Abdul-Malik bin Marwân became certain of

¹ *Tarikhu 'Umar*, by Ibn Al-Jauzi, p. 208

² *Al-'Ihyâ*, vol. 4 p. 446

³ *At-Tathkirah fi al-Isti'dadi liyaumi al-Akhirah*, p. 7

⁴ *Al-'Aqibah*, p. 128

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death, he said, "By Allâh! I wish I worked as a porter from the day I was born until this day."¹

Moreover, Abu Dardâ' رضي الله عنه said, "When you remember the dead, consider yourself one of them."²

Death is just, for it treats kings and commoners, the young and the old as equals. Death enters small rooms and is never rebuffed from luxurious castles. Death brought demise to those who owned the world and those who owned nothing in the world.

Sa'îd bin As-Sâ'ib رحمه الله was asked, "How are you today?" He said, "Today, I am awaiting the coming of death without an appointment."³

Therefore, those who do not know when they will die ought to be prepared for it and avoid being deceived by youth and good health, especially since death strikes the young more than the old.

Abu Sulaimân Ad-Dârâni said, "I asked Umm Harun, a worshipper of Allâh, 'Do you like to die?' She said, 'No.' I asked, 'Why not?' She said, 'By Allâh! If I disobeyed a creation, I would hate to meet him, so what about meeting the Creator, the Exalted and the Most Honored?'"⁴

Also, when death approached Mu'âwiyah bin Abu Sufyân, he said, "Help me sit up." He then started praising Allâh the Exalted and remembering Him in *Dhikr*, then wept. He said to himself, "O Mu'âwiyah! You remember your Lord after you became old and weak. Why did you not remember Him when your youth was plentiful and abundant?" He again wept and said, "O Lord! Have mercy on the old disobedient man who has a hard heart! O Allâh! Pardon the error, forgive the mistake and be forbearing with he

¹ *Ta'rikhu Al-Khulafaa*, by Jalal Ad-Din as-Suyuti, p. 205

² *Al-'Ihyâ*, vol. 4 p. 480

³ *Sifatu As-Safwah*, vol. 2 p. 283

⁴ *Al-'Aqibah*, p. 30

who has hope in none except You and trusts none except You.”¹

When Abdul-Malik bin Marwân was asked about what he felt in the illness before he died, he said, “I feel as Allâh the Exalted said:

﴿ وَلَقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا فُرَادَىٰ كَمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَرَرْتُمْ مَا خَوَّلْتُمْ وِرَاءَ ظُهُورِكُمْ ﴾

[الأنعام: ٩٤]

“And truly, you have come unto Us alone (without wealth, companions or anything else) as We created you the first time. You have left behind you all that which We had bestowed on you.” (6:94)²

Death has never been absent from our sight, and therefore, we do not need anyone to remind us of it. Each day that passes brings us closer to death and the Hereafter, but we try to forget its imminence and nearness.

We should implement the advice that Ibn As-Simâk suggested, “If you can live the life of one who died and was brought back to life afterwards, because he was granted his request and invocation for a respite, then do so. In this case, you will be prepared and ready to go. Verily, he who wrongs himself does not give charity from his money or bring forth good deeds for himself.”³

Life passes quickly, as fast as dreams, even though man thinks that time is infinite, and thus, is deceived by hope from remembering the Hereafter. This is why Al-Mu‘tasim used to say when he was dying, “If I knew that my life would be this short, I would not have committed what I committed.”⁴

Our life terms are rather short, their expiration date has already been recorded and our breaths are numbered. Mahdi bin Maimun

¹ *Ath-Thabatu 'Inda al-Mamat*, vol. 2 p. 89

² *Al-Bidayah wan-Nihayah*, vol. 9 p. 74

³ *Sifatu as-Safwah*, vol. 3 p. 176

⁴ *Ath-Thabatu 'Inda al-Mamat*, by bin al-Jauzi, p. 92

said, "I visited 'Hassân bin Abu Sufyân when he was ill before he died and asked him how he felt. He said, 'I will feel fine, if I was saved from the Fire.' He was asked if he wanted anything. Abu Sufyân replied, 'A rather long night, so that I fill what is between its two ends with acts of worship.'"¹

It was reported that when Mu'âdh bin Jabal رضى الله عنه was dying, he asked if the morning came. He was told that the morning did not come yet. He kept repeating the question until he was told that the morning has come, so he said, "I seek refuge with Allâh from a night which the day afterwards directs to the Fire." He also said, "Welcome to death, a returning absentee and a loved one who came back at a time of need. O Allâh! I feared You and today I have hope in You. O Allâh! You know that I did not love this life or prolonged stay in it to own springs or to plant trees, but to fast for long hot days, stand in prayer during cold nights, strive (in Your cause) for hours at a time and sit knee to knee with scholars during religious gatherings."²

This is what they lived for. But where are we from fasting the days and praying during cold nights? Where are we from seeking knowledge and learning with scholars? How will we think back about wasted time when death comes to us announcing that it is time to leave?

Before he died, Habib Al-'Ajâmi used to weep and declare, "I am about to go on a long journey that I never went on before, on a path I never took before, visit my Master and Protector Whom I never saw before, and witness horrors that I never witnessed before."³

They prepared for death in the manner of those who do not know when the journey will start or when they will be transferred: they were neither deceived by hopes nor were they lazy because the

¹ *Hilyatu Al-Auliyya*, vol. 3 p. 117

² *Minhajul-Qasidin*, by Al-Maqdisi, p. 431

³ *Madariju as-Salikin*, by bin Al-Qayyim, vol. 1 p. 22

end seemed far away.

Just before he died, Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه wept and replied when asked why he wept, "I do not weep for your world! I weep because of the far journey I am going on and the little provision I have. Now I have ensued on a climb that will end in settling down in a Paradise or a Fire, and I do not know to which of them I will be taken."¹

As for residents of palaces and those in positions of authority, who are envied in this life because of the delight and comforts they enjoy, let us examine their state upon death. At the time of death, they go through difficult times, their eyes stare and their breath becomes fast.

Muhammad bin Mansur Al-Baghdâdi said:

"I went to Abdullâh bin Tâhir when he was dying and said to him, 'Salâm (peace) be unto you, O commander!' He said, 'Now do not call me commander, but rather, prisoner.'"

Also, when Abdul-Malik bin Marwân was dying, he said, "I wish I used to be a slave for a man from Tihâmah (Western Arabia), tending a flock of sheep in its mountains, rather than becoming a caliph."²

Also, Caliph Al-Muntasir said at the time of death, when he was wished well, "All will happen except being well! Life has gone away and the Hereafter has come."³

Unequal positions and wealth in this life does not prevent death from being just to everyone. By the command of Allâh, death brings demise to the strong and doom to entire nations. This is why we should rush to repent before death comes to us. Shafiq bin Ibrahim رحمه الله said, "Prepare for death so that when it comes,

¹ *Hilyatu Al-Auliyaa*, vol. 1 p. 383

² *Tasliyatuh Ahli Al-Masa-ib*, p. 88

³ *Ath-Thabatu 'Inda al-Mamat*, p. 92

you do not ask for a respite.”¹

Even if you ask for a respite then, it will not be granted to you, for every life term has an expiration date. Therefore, be ready for death by performing good deeds and with sincere repentance.

Abul-Mundhir, Ismâ‘il bin ‘Umar said:

“We visited Warqâ’ bin ‘Umar bin Kulaib when he was dying; and he was reciting *Takbir* — *Allâhu Akbar* (Allâh is the Great), *Tahlil* — *Lâ ilâha illallâh* (none has the right to be worshipped except Allâh) and *Dhikr* remembering Allâh. When the number of visitors increased, Warqâ’ said to his son, ‘Return the greetings of *Salâm* to them on my behalf, so that they do not busy me from remembering my Lord.”²

Also, when Hudhaifah bin Al-Yamân was dying, he said (about death), “A loved one coming at a time of need; I used to fear your coming, but this day, I have hope in your arrival.”³

Also, Hasan Basri رحمه الله wept very hard, and he was asked why he wept. He replied, “For fear that Allâh might throw me in the Fire and care less about me.”⁴

When we read the stories of the *Salaf*, our example in righteousness and active worshipping of Allâh, and the stance they took regarding death, these stories stir emotions in our hearts, especially since we see that death is surrounding us from every direction. We ought to think about the *Salaf* statements, such as the advice Al-‘Alâ’ bin Ziyâd gave us, “One of you should consider that death has come to him and that he asked his Lord, the Exalted, for respite and was granted respite. Therefore, let one work in the obedience of Allâh (while still alive).”⁵

¹ *Az-Zuhd*, by Al-Bayhaqi, p. 239

² *Tathkiratu Al-‘Huffath*, vol. 1 p. 230

³ *Al-‘Aqibah*, p. 146

⁴ *Az-Zahru Al-Fa-i’h fi Thikri man Tanazzaha ‘an ath-Thunubi wal-Qaba-ih*, by Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Yusuf Al-Jazri, p. 91

⁵ *Hilyatu Al-Auliya*, vol. 2 p. 244

Hence, dear Brother and Sister, consider that you have been given a respite starting today, and be among the people who have prepared for the Hereafter in an excellent manner.

A man was asked when he was dying, "What is your condition," and he replied, "The condition of he who is starting on a long journey without sufficient provision, entering a lonely grave without any company and going back to the Just King without a valid excuse."¹

Also, when death approached Muhammad bin Al-Munkadir and he wept, he was asked why he wept. He replied, "By Allâh! I do not weep because of sins I know that I have committed, but because I fear an act I committed thinking it is unsubstantial, while it was substantial with Allâh."²

Further, after 'Umar رضى الله عنه was stabbed, Abdullâh bin 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما visited him and proclaimed, "Receive the glad tidings, O Chief of the Faithful! You embraced Islam with the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ at a time when people disbelieved, fought along with him when people betrayed him, he died while pleased with you, and no two men disagreed that you should become the caliph." 'Umar رضى الله عنه asked Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما to repeat his words and 'Umar رضى الله عنه then replied, "Verily, he whom you deceive is the deceived one! If I owned the earth's fill of silver and gold, I would use it as ransom from the horror to come."³

'Imrân Al-Khayyât said, "We visited Ibrahim An-Nakha'i when he was ill and found him weeping. We asked, 'Why are weeping, Abu 'Imrân?' He said, 'I am awaiting the Angel of Death, but I do not know if he will bring forth news of Paradise or the Fire.'"⁴

He has said the truth, for what comes after this life, except Paradise or the Fire? Have we thought about where we are

¹ *Al-'Ihyâ*, vol. 2 p. 251

² *At-Thabatu 'Inda al-Mamat*, p. 94

³ *Ta'rikhu 'Umar*, p. 43 and *At-Tathkirah*, p. 97

⁴ *Sifatu As-Safwah*, vol. 3 p. 89

headed to and which path we will be taking? Rather, prolonged hopes and unawareness have taken over us. We ask Allâh to awaken our hearts from sleep and to fill them with Faith and sound comprehension.

Al-Mughirah bin Habib said, "We visited Mâlik bin Dinâr during his illness before he died and saw him raising his head to heaven and saying, 'O Allâh, You know that I did not like staying in this life to satisfy my sexual organ or to fill my stomach.'"¹

May Allâh grant His Mercy to our *Salaf*, and indeed, there is a far difference between us and them. They loved to remain alive so that they could increase the acts of obedience and worship. Why do we wish to live longer?

Sulaiman At-Taimi said, "I visited one of my friends when he was dying and saw him in a bad shape, and that made me anxious. I asked him, 'Why are you afraid like this, when you, all thanks are due to Allâh, were on a righteous path?' He said, 'Why should I not feel afraid? Who deserves to be afraid more than I? By Allâh! Even if forgiveness came to me from Allâh, the Exalted, I would still feel ashamed from Him for what I have committed.'"²

May Allâh help us when it is time to meet Him and make us among those who prepare for death and are ready for its agonies and stupor, just as our *Salaf* used to be.

When Muhammad bin Sirin felt the approaching of death, he wept and said in answer to why he wept, "I weep because of my inadequacy in past days and the fewness of my good actions that would bring me closer to the high Paradise and save me from the blazing Fire."

Verily, death brings unease to people when it is mentioned, so much so that they wish people would cease talking about it. In

¹ *Hilyatu Al-Auliyya*, vol. 2 p. 361

² *Tasliyatuh Ahli Al-Masa-ib*, p. 88

comparison, ‘Umar bin Abdul-Aziz رحمه الله used to say, “If remembrance of death departed from my heart for an hour, my heart would be corrupted.”¹

Therefore, just like ‘Umar رحمه الله, death should not be absent from our minds for even an hour. However, we do not have the patience to hear about death, even for an hour. Some people would even depart from the gathering where death is being mentioned, because unawareness has taken over their hearts, as well as, eagerness for this life and its short delights.

Let us think about what Caliph Hârun Ar-Rashid said when he was choosing his own shroud and looking at it:

﴿ مَا أَعْنَى عَنِّي مَا لِيهِ ۝ هَلَاكَ عَنِّي سُلْطَانِيَّةٌ ﴾ [الحاقة: ٢٨، ٢٩]

“My wealth has not availed me. My power (and arguments to defend myself) have gone from me!” (69:28,29)

When death approached Salmân Al-Fârisi رضي الله عنه, he wept. He was asked why he wept and he replied, “I do not wept in grief for this life, but because the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ has recommended that one of us should only collect what is sufficient as provision for a traveler.” After Salmân died, what he left behind was counted and its value was of ten Dirhams only.²

Where are we from these righteous people?

‘Umar bin Abdul-Aziz رحمه الله reminded us of our destination and of the time when we will depart from this life, saying, “Do you not see that every day, you are preparing a traveler to Allâh, the Exalted and Ever-High, by day or by night? You then place them in a hole in the ground, where they will use dirt for pillows, leaving behind loved ones, wealth and power.”³

Moreover, when death approached Ibn Al-Mubârak, he said to

¹ *Al-'Aqibah*, p. 39

² *Ath-Thabatu 'Inda al-Mamat*, p. 93

³ *Al-'Ihyâ*, vol. 4 p. 480

Nasr, his servant, "Place my head on the ground," but Nasr wept. He asked him, "What makes you weep?" Nasr said, "I remembered the delight you enjoyed and here you die as a poor and a stranger." Ibn Al-Mubârak said, "Do not say that. I begged Allâh that I live the life of happy ones and die the death of the poor." He then ordered Nasr, "Recite *Shahâdah* to me (*Lâ ilâha illallâh*) and do not repeat it unless I say something else."¹

How can we feel safe, when *Al-Fâruq*, 'Umar رضى الله عنه said, "If I have the earth's fill of gold and silver, I would ransom myself with it. How can I feel safe knowing the horror that is still to come and before knowing the true news (about my final destination)?" Also, after 'Umar رضى الله عنه was stabbed, he asked his son to place his cheek on the ground and he did; 'Umar رضى الله عنه wept until some mud stuck to his eyes. 'Umar رضى الله عنه was weeping and saying, "Woe to me, and woe to my mother, if my Lord did not bestow His mercy on me."²

Further, Umm Dardâ' رضى الله عنها said that when a righteous man died, Abu Dardâ' used to say, "Congratulation. I wish I was in your place." When Umm Dardâ' رضى الله عنها asked him about it, he said, "Do you not know that one starts the day while a believer and ends it while hypocrite, thus, being rid of his Faith while he is unaware? This is why I congratulate that dead man [for dying while righteous] more than I wish for him to stay alive to pray and fast."³

When Al-Kinâni was dying, he was asked, "What type of actions were you doing?" He said, "If I was not dying, I would not have told you. I stood at the door of my heart for forty years, and whenever any other than Allâh passed by its door, I kept him away."⁴

¹ *Al-'Aqibah*, p. 145

² *Al-Mudhish*, by Jamal Ad-Din Al-Jauzi, p. 191

³ *Shar'hu as-Sudur*, p. 11

⁴ *Al-'Ihyâ*, vol. 4 p. 513

How many times did we stop at the doors of our hearts so that we find out who went through them?

When Bilâl رضى الله عنه was close to death, his wife said to him, "How sad I am!" He said, "Rather, how delighted I am! Tomorrow, I will meet the loved ones: Muhammad and his Companions."¹

Also, this is the *Fâruq* of this *Ummah*, رضى الله عنه Umar, let us see how fearful of Allâh he was. Abdullâh bin Zubair رضى الله عنهما said, "Ever since I became aware of my surroundings, no sadness struck us more than that which struck us when 'Umar bin Al-Khattâb was stabbed. He had led us in *Zuhr*, *'Asr*, *Maghrib* and *'Ishâ* prayers, as at ease and delighted as any of the people were. When it was time for *Fajr* prayer, a man led us in prayer and said *Takbir* in a different voice (not 'Umar's). It was Abdur-Rahmân bin 'Awf. When we finished the prayer, they said that the Leader of the Faithful (رضى الله عنه 'Umar) was stabbed. The people finished the prayer while 'Umar was still bleeding and did not pray *Fajr* prayer yet. He was told, 'O Leader of the Faithful! The prayer, the prayer.' He said, 'Yes, by Allâh! One has no share in Islam if he ignores the prayer.' He wanted to stand up, but his wound bled. He asked, 'O people! Did this stab occur by your knowledge?' 'Ali bin Abu Tâlib said, 'No, by Allâh! We do not know who was the attacker among the creation of Allâh. We would sacrifice ourselves for you and our blood for your blood.' 'Umar looked at Abdullâh bin 'Abbâs and said, 'Go out to the people, ask them and tell me the truth.' Ibn 'Abbâs went out and came back declaring, 'O Leader of the Faithful! Receive the glad tidings of Paradise! By Allâh, I never saw an eye that moves belonging to a male or a female but weeping for you, all wishing they could sacrifice their fathers and mothers for you. The [*Majoosi* (fire-worshipper)] slave of Al-Mughirah bin Shu'bah has stabbed you and twelve other men, who are now bleeding, and Allâh will decide about them whatever He decides.

¹ *Ath-Thabatu 'Inda al-Mamat*, p. 93

Congratulations of Paradise, O Leader of the Faithful.’ ‘Umar said, ‘Deceive someone else with this talk, O Ibn ‘Abbâs!’ Ibn ‘Abbâs said, ‘Why should I not say this when, by Allâh, your embracing Islam brought us might, your migration was a triumph, your leadership was filled with justice and you were killed unjustly.’ ‘Umar said, ‘Would you testify to the same before Allâh on the Day of Resurrection?’ ‘Ali bin Abu Tâlib said, ‘Yes, O Leader of the Faithful! We will testify for you before Allâh on the Day of Resurrection.’ ‘Umar then looked at his son Abdullâh and ordered him, ‘Place my cheek on the ground, my son!’ Abdullâh said later, ‘I did not oblige him thinking that he was unaware of what he was saying.’ So again ‘Umar ordered Abdullâh, ‘My son! Place my cheek on the ground.’ Abdullâh bin ‘Umar did not do it, and ‘Umar ordered him for a third time, ‘Place my cheek on the ground, may you have no mother!’ Abdullâh knew then that ‘Umar was aware of what he was saying and placed his cheek on the ground, until he saw the hairs on his beard between the sand on the ground. ‘Umar wept until the mud stuck to his eyes and said, ‘Woe to ‘Umar and to the mother of ‘Umar, if Allâh does not pardon him.’”¹

In addition, Abdul-Aziz bin Abu Rawwâd said, “I entered on Al-Mughirah bin Hakeem during the illness that preceded his death and said to him, ‘Advise me.’ He said, ‘Work for this end.’”²

As for us, did we work for this end? Did we work for the Day of Horror?

Abu Mas‘ud Al-Ansâri was asked, “What did Hudhaifah bin Al-Yamân say upon his death?” He said, “When it was evening, he said, ‘I seek refuge with Allâh from a day that directs to the Fire’, thrice. He then said, ‘Buy two white pieces of shroud for me. Indeed, they will remain on me but a little, for I will be

¹ *Tarikh ‘Umar*, p. 245

² *Hilyatu Al-Auliya*, vol. 8 p. 194

given instead of them better than they are or will be rid of them violently.”¹

It is a fact that the mannerism that a Muslim abides by is an act of drawing closer to Allâh. For instance, Sa‘îd bin Al-‘As did not forget his friends and companions when he was dying, for he gathered his sons and ordered them, “Let my friends only miss seeing my face. Be kind to them as I used to be, give them as I used to give them and provide sufficiently for them, so that they ask none for help. Verily, when a man seeks help, his flanks tremble and his limbs shake for fear that his request might be turned down.”²

May Allâh grant His Mercy to you, O Sa‘îd bin Al-‘Âs, and to the hands that gave away all that is good. Surely, how many a poor person did these hands feed and a distressed they helped.

‘Umar bin Abdul-Aziz رَحِمَهُ اللهُ said, “If it was not for fear that it might be an innovation in the religion, I would have vowed not to feel happy for anything in this life, until I see how the faces of the messengers of my Lord will look like upon death. Also, I would not like that death is made easy for me, for it is the last stance for which the believer receives reward.”³

Also, Al-Muzany said, “I visited Ash-Shâfi‘î in the illness before he died and asked him, ‘How have you become?’ He said, ‘I am travelling away from life, leaving my brethren, drinking the glass of demise, coming to see the evil I have done and will soon arrive at Allâh, the Exalted. I do not know if my soul will end in Paradise, so that I congratulate it, or in the Fire, so that I condole it.’ He then wept.”⁴

When Sa‘îd bin Al-Musaiyab رَحِمَهُ اللهُ was near death, he had some Dinars left. So he said, “O, Allâh! You know that I did not leave

¹ *As-Siyar*, vol. 2 p. 368

² *Al-Bidayah wan-Nihayah*, vol. 8 p. 94

³ *Hilyatu Al-Auliya‘*, vol. 5 p. 316

⁴ *Sifatun as-Safwah*, vol. 2 p. 258 and *As-Siyar*, vol. 10 p. 76

these Dinars but to preserve my honor (from begging others) and religion.”¹

At present, much money is collected from illegal resources (Such as from selling alcohol, usury transactions, theft, and so forth), kept in illegal locations (such as banking institutions that deal in usury) and spent in illegal ways (buying and selling what Allâh has prohibited, extravagance, bribes, etc.). Sa’îd bin Al-Musaiab رَحِمَهُ اللهُ, in comparison, left a few Dinars to preserve his honor and religion.

Things have changed and so did moral standards. Many Muslims have become unaware for so long -of death and Allâh’s rights- that they forgot what they were created for, even though Allâh has decided that:

﴿ وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴾ [الذاريات: ٥٦]

“And I (Allâh) created not the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me (Alone).” (51:56)

Abdur-Rahmân bin Al-Aswad wept when he was dying and said when he was asked why, “I am sorry for the prayer and fasting, (that he will no longer be able to perform)” and kept reciting the Qur’ân until he died.²

Departing this life occurs with a mere shroud and the good works you performed. You will be carried on people’s shoulders leaving behind dwellings that you built in which you left loved ones, wife and children.

You had all this, but ended up leaving with a mere shroud. ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ said to his son:

“Spend little on my shroud, for if I have good awaiting me with Allâh, He will give me what is better than that shroud. If it is the other destination, I will be rid of that shroud in a haste. Also, do not make my grave very wide, for if I have

¹ *As-Siyar*, vol. 4 p. 245

² *As-Siyar*, vol. 5 p. 112

good awaiting me with Allâh, He will make my grave as wide as my sight reaches. If it was the other, He will make my grave come together on me until my ribs crisscross each other [which is called, 'Dhaghtatu al-Qabr (literally, the squeeze in the grave)]."¹

Moreover, Zainab bint Jahsh رضى الله عنها said when she was dying, "I have prepared my own shroud, so if 'Umar sent another shroud for me, give away one of them!"

Furthermore, when a righteous man who used to perform acts of worship and asceticism was dying, he was asked, when it was thought he felt anxious, "Do you like to remain alive!" He said, "O people! The Return to Allâh is difficult."²

Also, Hasan Basri رحمه الله visited an ill person and found him suffering in the agonies of death. When Hasan Basri رحمه الله witnessed the hardship and stupor of death that man was experiencing, he went back to his family with a different color - or attitude- than the one he left with. They said to him, "Come eat, may Allâh grant you mercy." He said, "O my family! Take away your food and drink. By Allâh! I witnessed [such a difficult] death that I will keep preparing for until I meet."³

Once, Sufyân At-Thauri رحمه الله wept until the morning and was asked in the morning why and if it was for fear from his errors. He said, while holding some sand from the ground in his hand, "Sins are less difficult than this (i.e., the grave). I wept because I feared the evil end."

Indeed, it is a great wisdom to fear earning the evil end,⁴ because

¹ *Tarikhu al-Khulafaa*, p. 136

² because one does not know if Allâh will accept his acts of worship or reject them if they were performed for other purposes than the Pleasure of Allâh Alone in sincerity, or if they were not in accordance to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ, or both.

³ *At-Tathkirah*, p.:14

⁴ dying while a sinner, or committing a major sin, or a disbeliever

of the errors and sins one committed.

Imam Ahmad narrated that when Abu Dardâ' رضى الله عنه was near death, he kept reciting:

﴿وَنُقَلِّبُ أَفْئِدَتَهُمْ وَأَبْصَارَهُمْ كَمَا لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهِ أَوْلَٰى مَرَّةً وَنَذَرُهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ
يَعْمَهُونَ﴾ [الأنعام: ١١٠]

“And We shall turn their hearts and their eyes away (from guidance), as they refused to believe therein for the first time, and We shall leave them in their trespass to wander blindly.” (6:110)

This demonstrates that our *Salaf* were afraid that their errors might bar them from earning the good end (dying while a righteous Muslim) upon death. Know that the evil end, may Allâh save us from it, is not for those whose outward is set aright and whose inward is righteous. This is never heard of, all the thanks are for Allâh. Rather, the evil end is for those whose inner creed is corrupt, who insist on committing major sins and dare to commit substantial errors. This type might keep practicing evil until death comes to them before they repent from their errors, thus, taking them away before correcting their own selves and going back to Allâh. Consequently, the devil takes possession of this type when death strikes and kidnaps them when the confusion hits them, we seek refuge with Allâh from this end.¹

It was reported that Abdullâh bin Shurmah said:

“I went with ‘Âmir Ash-Sha‘bi to visit an ill man and found that he was dying, while another man was asking him to recite the *Shahâdah*², ‘Say: *Lâ ilâha illallâh*’, and repeating his demand. So Ash-Sha‘bi said to him, ‘Be kind to him.’ The dying man spoke and said, ‘Whether he asks

¹ *Al-Jawabu Al-Kafi*, by Ibn Al-Qayyim, p. 245

² and this *Sunnah* is called, ‘*Talqain*’, where those attending the dying person ask him or her to recite the Testimony of *Tauhid*: none has the right to be worshipped except Allâh.

me to recite it or not, I will never leave reciting it.' He then recited the *Āyah*:

﴿وَأَلْزَمَهُمْ كَلِمَةَ التَّقْوَىٰ وَكَانُوا أَحَقَّ بِهَا وَأَهْلَهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا﴾

[الفتح: ٢٦]

“And made them stick to the word of piety (i.e. none has the right to be worshipped but Allāh); and they were well entitled to it and worthy of it.” (48:26)

Ash-Sha‘bi commented, ‘All thanks are due to Allāh for saving our friend.’”¹

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

«مَنْ كَانَ آخِرُ كَلَامِهِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ.»

“He whose last words are: *Lā ilāha illallāh* (none has the right to be worshipped but Allāh), will enter Paradise.” (Abu Dāwud and Al-Hākim)

Therefore, there is a special status for reciting *Lā ilāha illallāh* upon death with regards to erasing sins and annulling them, if it is a testimony coming from a slave who feels certain in it and who is knowledgeable in its implications. A slave in whose heart lusts have died and whose rebellious self has settled down, and therefore, it obeyed after it had refused to obey, came along after going away, succumbed after feeling might and lost eagerness for this life and its insignificant delights.

It is a soul that has been humbled before its Lord, Creator and True Master, as humble before Him as ever, and as hopeful as ever for His pardon, forgiveness and mercy. A soul that felt sincere *Tauhid* at that moment and lost all ways and aspects of *Shirk* [polytheism, associating others with Allāh in the worship], sincerely believing that it is false. In this state, the believing soul gave up the struggle that used to tear it apart and became intent on dedicating attention to He to Whom it is coming back and

¹ *Al-'Aqibah*, p. 136

returning. This is when the believing slave directed his face to Allâh and went back to Him in heart and soul. Therefore, he submitted in *Tauhid* inwardly and outwardly and his public and secret affairs became the same, declaring, *Lâ ilâha illallâh*, sincerely from his heart. Moreover, his heart got rid of dedication to other than Allâh and looking at someone else besides Him.

Life fully departed his heart as he sat in wait for the Return to Allâh. The fires of lust were extinguished in his heart, which became filled with the Hereafter, placing it before his eyes, all the while throwing life behind his back. This is when this sincere testimony became the last of his works, thus purifying him from his sins, and brought him back to his Lord after pronouncing this truthful, sincere testimony, its inward as pure as its outward, and its public as pure as its secret. Had this testimony been uttered this sincerely from him before when he was well, he would have felt estranged from this life and its people and escaped to Allâh. Had he reached that exalted state before, he would have felt joy by being with Allâh, more than he felt with anyone besides Him. However, at that time, his testimony of *Tauhid* came from a heart full of lusts and love for this life and its delights, all the while seeking its luck and directing attention at other than Allâh. Had that testimony [that none has the right to be worshipped but Allâh, which the slave uttered when he was well and able] been as pure as it became upon death, it would have achieved more for him and he would have lived a different life than the lower type of life he lived. Certainly, Allâh is sought for each and every type of help. What does one own of his own affairs, if his forelock is with Allâh, his soul belongs to Him, his heart is between two of His fingers, and He changes the hearts as He wills, and his life and death are His property? Moreover, his happiness, misery, movements, idleness, statements and actions are tied to Allâh's Will and Permission. Thus, the slave does not move except by Allâh's Leave, nor does he do anything except by His Will. If Allâh [abandons the slave and] makes him dependant on his own self, he will be relying on weakness, loss,

shortcoming, sin and error. If Allâh made him reliant on other creations, he will be relying on he who is unable to bring him harm, benefit, life, death or resurrection. If Allâh abandons the slave, then his enemy will capture him and make him a prisoner. Therefore, the slave cannot afford reliance on other than Allâh, not for one instant even. Rather, he needs Allâh as long as he is still breathing and for the benefit of every atom in his outward and inward existence, for his poverty to Allâh is perfect in all respects. Yet, the slave lags behind and turns away from Allâh, earning His anger by disobeying Him, even though his need to Him is ultimate in every way. He forgets Allâh's remembrance and leaves it behind his back, even though his return is ultimately to Allâh and his final stand will be before Him.¹

Muhammad bin Al-Qâsim said, "I visited Ibn Aslam four days before he died in Neishapur (in Uzbekistan), and he said to me, 'O Abu Abdullâh! Come and receive the glad tidings of the good that Allâh has brought to your brother. Here I am near death, yet, Allâh has endowed me in that I do not own a Dirham about which He would question me.' He then said, 'Close the door and do not let anyone in until I die. Know that I depart from this life leaving behind no inheritance other than my garment, sheet, pot that I use for *Wudu*' and these books. Therefore, do not ask the people for anything (for my funeral).' He had a cloth in which he kept thirty Dirhams, so he said to me, 'This money belongs to my son, a gift given to him from a relative. There is no purer money for me to use than this money, for the Prophet ﷺ said:

«أَنْتَ وَمَالُكَ لِأَبِيكَ»

'You and your money are the property of your father.'²

The Prophet ﷺ also said:

¹ *Al-Fawa'id*, by bin Al-Qayyim, p. 73

² An authentic *Hadith* collected by Al-Bayhaqi from Jabir and At-Tabarani from Samurah.

«أَطْيَبُ مَا أَكَلَ الرَّجُلُ مِنْ كَسْبِهِ وَإِنَّ وَلَدَهُ مِنْ كَسْبِهِ»

‘The purest of what man eats is from his earning, and his offspring are among his earning.’¹ Therefore, use this money to buy my shroud, and if you found a shroud for ten Dirhams in which you could cover my body, then do not buy one for fifteen. Then, cover my shrouded body with my sheet, then with my garment and give my pot to a poor person.’²

Also, when death came to Sulaimân At-Taymi, he was told, “Receive the good news, for you were vigorous in the obedience of Allâh, the Exalted.” He said, “Do not say this, for I do not know what Allâh, the Exalted and Most Honored, will do to me, since He said:

﴿وَبَدَأْتُمْ مِنْ رَبِّ اللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يَكُونُوا يَحْتَسِبُونَ﴾ [الزمر: ٤٧]

‘And there will become apparent to them from Allâh what they had not been reckoning.’ ” (39:47)³

Some scholars commented on this *Ayah*:

“They performed deeds that appeared to them to be righteous, but they found them to be evil deeds.”⁴

Do not be deceived by this life and let not prolonged hopes betray you. Death might strike a close relative today, a loved one tomorrow and you soon thereafter. And even if you live long, you will witness the large number of those who will be laid in the graves and the fewness of the survivors.

When Sa‘îd bin Marwân was dying, he said,

“Might that I was nothing, or even like that running spring.”

¹ An authentic *Hadith* collected by At-Tirmithi, An-Nasai and Al-Bayhaqi.

² *As-Siyar*, vol. 12 p. 199

³ *Al-‘Aqibah*, p. 133

⁴ because they showed off with their acts of worship, or did not follow the *Sunnah*.

He then said, "Bring my shroud. Woe to you (O life), how short is your long and how few is your abundance."¹

When 'Uthmân رضى الله عنه was dying, he kept declaring while his blood was pouring out, "*La ilaha illa Anta, subhânaka inni kuntu minaz-zâlimin* [none has the right to be worshipped except You (Allâh), all praise is due to You, I was among the wrongdoers]. O Allâh! I seek Your help for all my affairs and invoke You to bestow patience on me during my affliction²."³

There is no rest in this life, otherwise, where are the earlier nations, the fathers and the forefathers? By Allâh! This life is the dwelling of actions and taking provisions of Allâh's obedience before departing from it [to the Hereafter]. Today, there is a chance to perform deeds without recompense for them, but tomorrow, there will be only recompense and no chance to perform deeds. Furthermore, departing the life of actions to the life of recompense is hard, just as Al-Fudail bin 'Iyâd concurred, "Entering this life is easy, but departing from it is tormenting."⁴

Fâtimah bint Abdul-Malik bin Marwân, wife of 'Umar bin Abdul-Aziz رحمه الله, said, "I heard 'Umar bin Abdul Aziz during the illness before his death say, 'O Allâh! Hide my death from them, even if it was for an hour.' On the day he died, I left the room he was in to another room close by, where a door separated between me and him. I heard him recite:

﴿ تِلْكَ الدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ نَجْعَلُهَا لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُرِيدُونَ عُلُوًّا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فَسَادًا وَالْعَاقِبَةُ

لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴾ [القصص: ٨٣]

"That home of the Hereafter (i.e., Paradise), We shall assign to those who rebel not against the truth with pride and oppression in the land nor do mischief by committing crimes. And the good end is for the *Muttaqûn* (the pious)." (28:83)

¹ *As-Siyar*, vol. 4 p. 250

² When the disobedient rebels besieged and then killed Uthman, رضى الله عنه.

³ *Al-'Aqibah*, p. 122

⁴ *Mukashafatu Al-Qulub*, p. 157

He became idle thereafter and I did not hear movement or speech from him. So I said to a servant that he had, 'See if he is asleep.' When the servant went in, he wept prompting me to rush in; 'Umar was dead.'"¹

It was reported that before he died, Muhammad bin Al-Munkadir wept deeply. He was asked about what made him weep and replied, while raising his sight to heaven, "O Allâh! You have ordered and forbade me, but I disobeyed. If You pardon, You will have given a favor, but if You punish, You will not have done injustice."²

Have you thought that one day, you will die, see your final destination, witness the severity of the recompense, then be taken to Paradise or Hell?

Al-Qa'qa' bin Hakeem said:

"I have prepared for death for the past thirty years. So if it came now, it would not prompt me to change anything."

To continue, Abdullâh bin Al-Mubâarak was reported to have laughed when he was dying, after raising his head towards heaven. He then said:

"For this (the good end), let those who seek to work, work."³

Also, when a righteous man was about to die, his wife wept. He asked her why she was weeping and she said, "For you." He said, "If you want to weep, weep for yourself. As for me, I have wept for this day for the past forty years."

Anas bin 'Iyâd said:

"I lived to see Safwân bin Salim, who, had he been told that tomorrow would be the Day of Resurrection, he would

¹ *Ath-Thabatu 'Inda Al-Mamat*, p. 90.

² *Az-Zahru al-Fa-i'h*, p. 91.

³ *Al-Aqibah*, p. 135

not have increased the acts of worship he performed, for he was a vigorous worshipper (of Allâh).”¹

This is an excellent preparation, and indeed, how good it is to preserve time in the obedience of Allâh. Where are we from those who feared Allâh, preserved the acts of worship and avoided the prohibitions?

Have you not thought about the moment when death will come to you, knowing that you will suffer painful afflictions at that moment? Surely, the scene of death stirs deep emotions, when the soul of the dying person reaches the throat and its owner stands at the doorway of the Hereafter. Then, all those around will stand helpless, unable to extend any help for him. Further, he will not know what is going on around or with him and will surrender all power to Allâh:²

﴿وَجَاءَت سَكْرَةُ الْمَوْتِ بِالْحَقِّ ذَلِكَ مَا كُنْتُمْ مِنْهُ يُحِيدُ﴾ [ق: ١٩]

“And the stupor of death will come in truth: ‘This is what you have been avoiding!’ ” (50:19)

You will not be able to raise your hand or move your tongue at the time of death. Your feet will be paralyzed, your eyes tearful and the people will be gathering around you to no avail.

Bilâl bin Sa‘d once stood up and heralded, “O people of *Taqwa* (piety)! You were not created to perish. You will only be transferred from one life to another. And just as you were transferred from (your fathers’) loins to wombs and from wombs to this life, you will be transferred from this life to graves, from graves to the Gathering and from the Gathering to eternity in Paradise or Hellfire.”³

¹ *As-Siyar*, vol. 5 p. 366

² *At-Tathkirah fi Al-Isti‘dadi liyaumi Al-Akhirah*, p. 15

³ *As-Siyar*, vol. 5 p. 91

The Prophet's Guidance Regarding Funeral Arrangements

It was the Prophet's guidance to lay down the deceased, close his eyes and cover his head and body. He sometimes kissed the dead, just as he kissed 'Uthmân bin Maz'un after he died, and then wept.¹ Also, Abu Bakr رضى الله عنه kissed the Prophet ﷺ [and wept] after the Prophet ﷺ died.

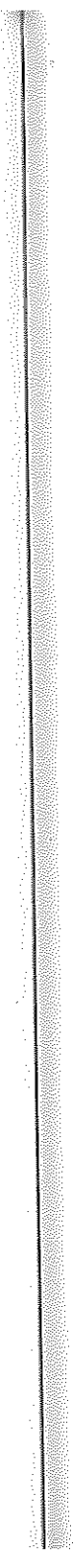
The Prophet ﷺ ordered that the deceased be washed three, five or more odd number times, as much as the person who is washing him sees fit. The Prophet ﷺ ordered that *Kâfur* (camphor) be used in the last wash. Also, the Prophet ﷺ did not order to wash martyrs, those who died in battle, and Imam Ahmad رحمه الله reported that he disallowed washing them. Furthermore, he had the shields that the martyrs were wearing removed, but buried them in the clothes they had on and did not pray the *Janâzah* (Funeral) prayer on them.

When a *Muhrim* died, the Prophet ﷺ ordered that he be washed with water and *Sidr* and be buried in the two cloths of *Ihrâm* that he was wearing. He also disallowed using perfume on him or covering his head.

The Prophet ﷺ ordered those who took care of the deceased's funeral to choose a good shroud, using the color white, and to refrain from extravagance with regards to shrouds. When the shroud available did not cover the entire body, the Prophet ﷺ ordered that the head been covered with the shroud and the feet covered with grass.²

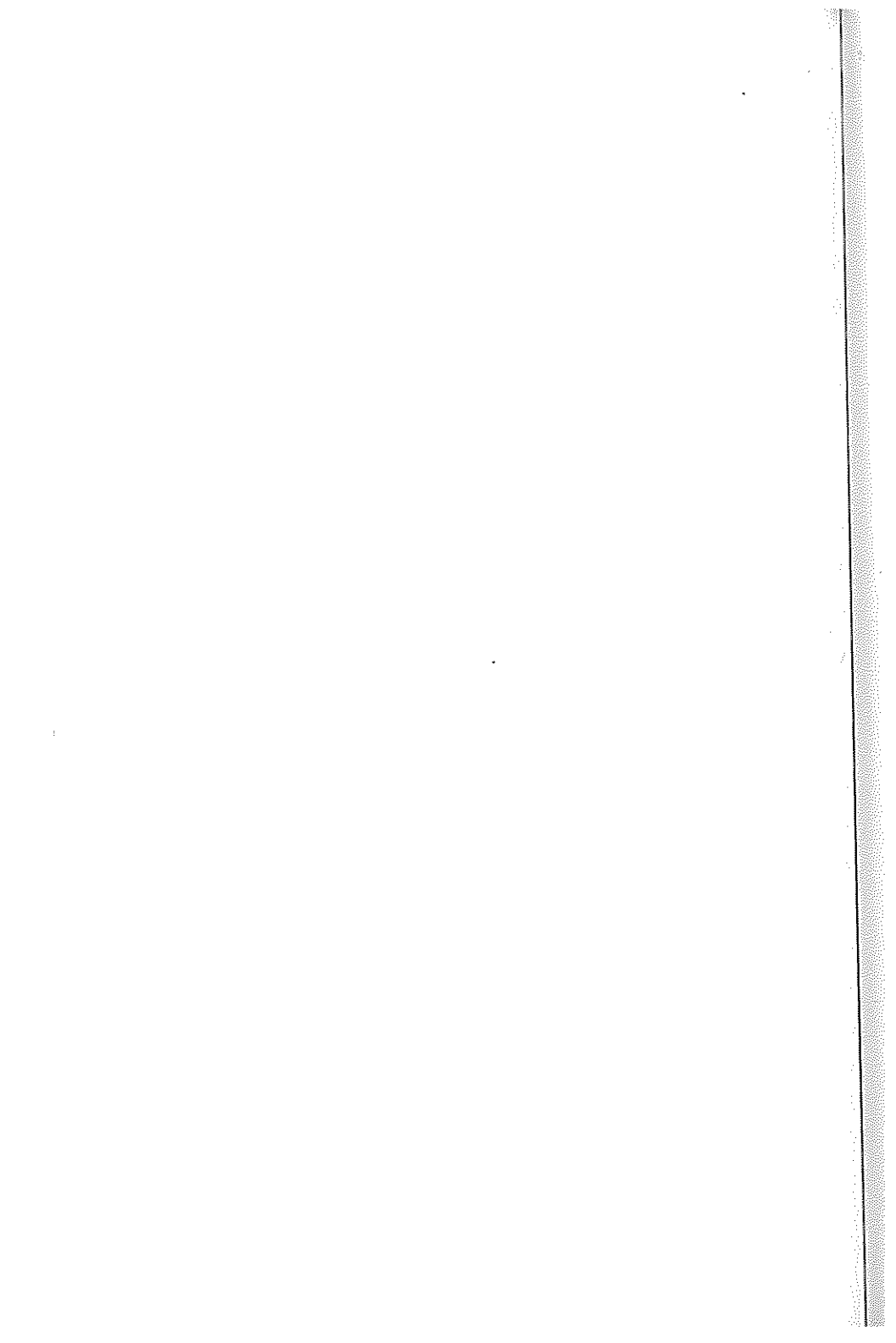
¹ A Hasan *Hadith* collected by *Abu Dâwud*, *At-Tirmidi* and *Ibn Mâjah* from 'Âishah رضى الله عنها.

² Refer to *Zadul Ma'ad*, vol. 1 p. 502-504



Third Stop:





The *Janâzah* (Funeral)

Abu Sa'îd Al-Khudri رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said:

«عُودُوا الْمَرِيضَ، وَاتَّبِعُوا الْجَنَائِزَ تَذَكُّرًا لِمَا آخِرَ» .

“Visit the ill and follow funeral processions, for they remind you of the Hereafter.”¹

When it becomes certain that one is near death, he should be turned towards the *Qiblah* (direction of prayer) on his right side. When the soul departs its body, it is the *Sunnah* to close the deceased's eyes and mouth then to wash his body. Men should be shrouded in three white cloths, while women should be shrouded in five garments: an *Izâr* (an inner garment or cloth), a *Khimâr* (a scarf that covers the head and back), a long shirt and two cloths.

The corpse should then be carried to receive the funeral prayer from Muslims, which the Muslim receives only once and it will be the last time he or she enters the mosque.²

Know, may Allâh grant you His Mercy, that there are lessons to be learned from funerals and thoughts to embrace at that time. Funerals should wake up the sleepy, especially those who go out and come in, indulge in sale and purchase, construct this and demolish that. When it is time, such a person will receive a heavenly command and an eternal decision from his (or her) Lord that will bring idleness to his movements, extinguish his light and leave him like a piece of wood or a stone. In this condition, if anyone shouts at him, he will neither hear nor respond, and if he is cut to pieces or burnt, he will not protest.

¹ An authentic *Hadith* collected by Ahmad, Ibn Hibbân and Al-Baihaqi from Abu Sa'îd رضى الله عنه.

² as it is sternly prohibited to bury the dead in the mosque or build a mosque around any grave

Munâzil bin Sa'îd رحمه الله said, "We prayed the funeral prayer along with Dâwud At-Tâ'i, who did not realize I was behind him. So he recited:

﴿وَمِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ بَرْزَخٌ إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ﴾ [المؤمنون: ١٠٠]

"And behind them is *Barzakh* (a barrier) until the Day when they will be resurrected." (23:100)

He then said to himself, 'O Dâwud! He who fears the warnings, will see the far coming near, and he who has prolonged hopes, will have his actions becoming deficient. Certainly, all that is bound to come, is near. Know, O Dâwud, that all things that busy you from your Lord bring evil repercussions. O Dâwud! Know that all the people of this life are among the residents of the graves, and surely, they will feel sorrow for what they have left behind and rejoice for the good deeds they have performed. Also, know that what brings grief to residents of the graves [for having collected it] is that which the people of this life fight about and compete in collecting!"¹

Have you seen the corpse being carried away, with the people all around it, not able to bring benefit or harm to its own self? The corpse might be moved to the right and left, but cannot prevent any of these movements. It is headed towards a destination that involves questioning, for which it must and will give answers, and end up in Paradise or the Fire.

Abu 'Amr Ibn Al-'Ala' رحمه الله said:

"I was sitting with Jarir, who was dictating a poem to his scribe, when a funeral passed by, prompting Jarir to comment, 'By Allâh! Funerals have brought me white hairs."²

Funeral processions pass by us, but the eyes do not overflow

¹ *Az-Zuhd*, by Al-Baihaqi, p. 237

² *Al-'Aqibah*, p. 152

with tears nor do the hearts move with emotions. We do not see the effect of funerals in life, nor see sadness on the faces. By Allâh! This is a type of heedlessness, for who (except heedless persons) would not draw a lesson from a corpse being carried to a small hole [where it will remain until the Day of Judgment]?

How are far We from our Predecessors?

Al-A'mash رحمه الله said, "We used to join in a funeral procession and fail to recognize who was receiving condolences, for many people would be weeping for their own selves, not only for the dead!"

Also, Thâbit Al-Banâni رحمه الله said:

"We used to participate in funerals and see that everyone would be weeping."

Moreover, Ibrâhim An-Nakha'i رحمه الله said:

"They (the *Salaf*) used to attend a *Janâzah*, and its effect would show on them for days thereafter. They used to often think about death and the condition of those deceased."¹

Is it because you lived long and enjoyed good health and well-being that you are being deceived and lured not to think about the day when you will be carried to the grave? Would that your feet carry you to a righteous deed and your thoughts compel you to prepare for that day in which you will become a total stranger?

Dâwud Ibn Al-Muhabbir رحمه الله said that his father said, "Ar-Rabi' passed by us when we were preparing a funeral and said, 'Who is this strange man in your midst?' We said, 'He is not a stranger. Rather, he is a beloved relative.' He wept and said, 'Who deserves to be a more stranger than a dead person among the living?' All those present wept."

¹ *Al-'Aqibah*, p 153.

Muhammad Ibn Al-Munkadir رحمه الله participated in a *Janâzah* along with Safwân Ibn Salim and several worshippers of Allâh. When the *Janâzah* prayer finished, Safwân said, "As for this dead person, his deeds have ceased to increase and needed the supplication of those whom he left behind." By Allâh, all those present wept.¹

Moreover, Usaid Ibn Hudair said, "I never participated in a *Janâzah* and talked about anything other than what will be done to the deceased and the destination he will be taken to."²

Indeed, this is the clear vision and the sound understanding. It is amazing that many people see the dead frozen like a mountain, but, this scene neither moves them, nor brings emotions to their hearts or tears to their eyes, as if this fate will never touch them or a funeral will not be held for them later.

Al-Hasan Al-Basri رحمه الله commented when a *Janâzah* passed by him, "What an eloquent lesson that is soon forgotten! What an eloquent lesson if it is brought to a living heart!" He then said, "What an encompassing heedlessness that overcame people, as if they are seeing a dream: the dead of tomorrow is burying the dead of today."³

Also, Al-Hasan Ibn Sâlih رحمه الله joined a *Janâzah* and when the dead person was about to be buried, Al-Hasan looked at the grave and fainted. He was carried to his house on the same mat that the deceased was brought on!⁴

Ibrahim An-Nakha'i رحمه الله said: "When we would attend a *Janâzah* or hear of one, the effect of that news would show on us for days. We knew that the dead has succumbed to a fate that will direct him to Paradise or the Fire. You, however, talk about

¹ *As-Siyar*, vol. 5 p. 366

² *Al-'Aqibah*, p. 153

³ *Al-'Aqibah*, p. 153

⁴ *Sifatuas-Safwah*, vol. 3 p. 155

matters of this life during *Janâzah*.”¹

When Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه passed by a *Janâzah*, he said:

“Depart in the morning, we might depart in the evening. Depart in the evening, we might depart in the morning. An eloquent lesson, followed by fast forgetfulness, the former (the lesson) goes away while the latter (forgetfulness) remains.”²

Suwayd bin Ghafilah said, “The angels walk before the *Janâzah* and declare, ‘What has he brought forth? (of good or evil deeds) while the people are wondering about what he left behind!’”

Furthermore, a man once saw another man laughing in a *Janâzah* and said to him:

“You laugh in the *Janâzah*! I will never speak to you again.”³

O Son of Adam! You laugh from death and at its site, even though you are what Hasan Basri رحمه الله described, “Son of Adam lives through three conditions: an affliction that strikes, a perishable delight and a deadly fate.”⁴ Hasan Basri رحمه الله also said:

“A brother of ours died and we performed the *Janâzah* prayer for him. When he was laid in his grave and covered with a garment, silah bin Ashyam came and said, ‘If you were saved from this stance, you would have averted a great evil. Otherwise, I do not think you would ever be safe.’ He and all those present wept.”⁵

Hasan Basri رحمه الله said to a man who attended a *Janâzah*, “If this dead man went back to life, do you think he would perform good

¹ *Hilyatu Al-Auliyya*, vol. 4 p. 227

² *Hilyatu Al-Auliyya*, vol. 1 p. 383

³ *Az-Zuhd*, p. 23

⁴ *Al-Hasan Al-Basri*, p. 44

⁵ *Hilyatu Al-Auliyya*, vol. 2 p. 241

deeds?” He said, “Yes.” Hasan Basri رحمه الله said, “He won’t come back, but you can still perform good deeds?”

Death will certainly meet us, no matter how busy we are or how hard we try to forget its imminence. One day, death will knock on the door and the loved ones and companions will be carried away.

In a *Janâzah*, Abu Dardâ’ رضي الله عنه saw a man asking whose *Janâzah* it was, and Abu Dardâ’ رضي الله عنه replied:

This is your *Janâzah*, your *Janâzah*. Allâh the Exalted said:

﴿إِنَّكَ مَيِّتٌ وَإِنَّهُمْ مَمَيِّتُونَ﴾ [الزمر: ٣٠]

‘Verily, you (O Muhammad ﷺ) will die, and verily, they (too) will die.’ ” (39:30)¹

¹ *Hilyatu Al-Auliya’*, vol. 6 p. 201

Prophetic guidance regarding to the *Janâzah*

After the Prophet ﷺ prayed the *Janâzah* for a dead person, he would proceed on foot in front of the *Janâzah* to the graveyard. This was the *Sunnah* that also the Rightly Guided Caliphs followed after the Prophet ﷺ.

The Prophet ﷺ legislated for those who follow the *Janâzah* while riding, to do so behind the *Janâzah*, while those who follow it on foot to be close to it, either behind, in front, to the right or the left of the *Janâzah*. The Prophet ﷺ commanded that the *Janâzah* procession be carried in haste, as if those carrying it were running.

When the Prophet ﷺ followed a *Janâzah*, he would not sit down until it was laid down. He said:¹

«إِذَا تَبِعْتُمُ الْجِنَازَةَ فَلَا تَجْلِسُوا حَتَّى تُوَضَّعَ».

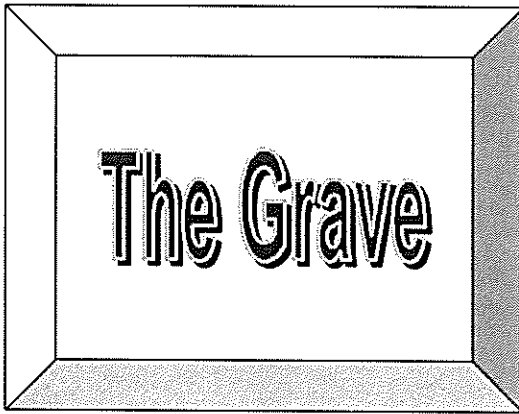
“When you follow a *Janâzah*, do not sit until it is laid down.”²

¹ Muslim collected this *Hadith* from Abu Sa'id رضي الله عنه.

² Refer to *Zadul-Ma'ad min Hadyi Khayri Al-'Ibad*, by Imam Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah, vol. 1 p. 517 and thereafter.



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The Grave

Now, you have been carried to the graveyard and brought close to the ground so that you dwell in a small, dark lonely hole. The nearest of kin and the most beloved to you have lowered you into your grave, where you will rest placed on your right side, with the top of the shroud on your face untied and a stone placed on the hole (*Lahd*) inside the grave you were placed in. They then threw sand in your grave and when they finished, one of them said, "Invoke Allâh for forgiveness for your brother and for making him firm,¹ for he is now being asked."

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said:

«مَا رَأَيْتُ مَنْظَرًا قَطُّ إِلَّا وَالْقَبْرُ أَفْظَعُ مِنْهُ.»

"The grave is more horrifying than any horrible scene I ever saw."²

Furthermore, whenever 'Uthmân رضى الله عنه stood next to a grave, he used to weep until his beard becoming wet. He was asked, "You mention Paradise and do not weep, but you weep from this scene?" He said, "The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said:

«الْقَبْرُ أَوَّلُ مَنَازِلِ الْآخِرَةِ، فَإِنْ نَجَا مِنْهُ فَمَا بَعْدَهُ أَيْسَرُ مِنْهُ، وَإِنْ لَمْ يَنْجُ مِنْهُ فَمَا بَعْدَهُ أَشَدُّ مِنْهُ.»

'The grave is the first in the stages of the Hereafter. If one is saved from it,³ what is afterwards is even easier. If one is not saved from it, what comes after that is even harder'.⁴

When Nâfi' رضى الله عنه was dying he wept and was asked, "What

¹ so that he affirms to angels *Munkir* and *Nakir* that Allâh is his Lord, Islam is his religion and Muhammad ﷺ is the Messenger he followed.

² A *Hasan Hadith* collected by *At-Tirmidhi*, *Al-Baihaqi* and *Al-Hâkim* from Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه.

³ from punishment in the grave.

⁴ *Az-Zuhd*, p. 189 This *Hadith* is of a *Hasan* type and is collected by *At-Tirmidhi*, *Al-Baihaqi* and *Al-Hâkim* from 'Uthmân رضى الله عنه.

makes you weep?” He said, “I remembered Sa’d (bin Mu‘âdh) and the coming together of the grave (on the dead),” in reference to the *Hadith* that ‘Âishah رضى الله عنها narrated from the Prophet ﷺ that he said:

«إِنَّ لِلْقَبْرِ ضِعْطَةً لَوْ كَانَ أَحَدٌ نَاجِيًا مِنْهَا نَجَا سَعْدُ بْنُ مُعَاذٍ.»

“Verily, the grave comes together (on its resident), and if anyone was to be saved from it, it would have been Sa’d bin Mu‘âdh¹.”²

It is only a few moments afterwards, and those gathered around your grave will depart and leave you tied to your actions. Your grave will become either a garden in Paradise, may Allâh make our graves from this type, or a hole in the Fire, may Allâh save us from this type.

A Persian man once passed by a young boy and asked him, “Where is the city?” The boy told the man to ascend a certain hill that oversees the city. When the man went up the hill he found that it oversees the graveyard, so the man thought that the boy was either ignorant or wise! He went back to the boy and asked him, “I asked you where the city was and you directed me to the graveyard?” The boy said, “I saw the people of this life transferred to the graveyard and never come back from it!”³

In this world, people are busy in their affairs and daily life, but as for the grave dweller, he was given sand as his bed. Therefore, are there those who would draw lessons from this scene? Anas bin Mâlik رضى الله عنه said:

“Should I tell you about two days and two nights similar to

¹ for Sa’d’s grave came closer on him for a short while, then was made spacious for him. Sa’d رضى الله عنه was one of the best Companions of the Messenger of Allâh, and the Throne of Allâh shook when he died.

² *As-Siyar* 5:99; an authentic *Hadith* collected by Ahmad from ‘Âishah رضى الله عنها

³ *Ath-Tharari fi Thikri az-Zarari*, by Ibn Al-‘Adeem, p. 62

which the creations never heard of? The first day is when the bringer of glad [or evil] tidings comes to you from Allâh the Exalted [upon death], conveying either His Pleasure or His Anger. Another day is when you will be brought before your Lord holding your Book of Records, either in your right hand or in your left hand.¹ There is the night when you will remain asleep in the grave, where you never slept before. There is another night where on the day after, the Day of Resurrection will commence.”²

Mâlik bin Dinâr once went to the graveyard when a man was being buried and said to himself, “Tomorrow, Mâlik will end up like this man, but he will not have anything to use as a pillow in his grave.”³

Dear Brother and Sister!

Our righteous *Salaf* used to often think about the Hereafter, and when they enjoyed a delight in this life, they would ask Allâh to grant them from the delight of Paradise. When they experienced a hardship of this life, they would seek refuge with Allâh from the Hellfire.

When the light went out in the house of Hishâm bin Abu Abdullâh, he would turn around in his bed until his wife brought a light for him. So she asked him why he felt anxious when the light went off and he replied, “When the light goes off, I remember the darkness of the grave.”⁴

One time, a man passed over a hanging bridge and was scared when he saw how small yet high the bridge was. His companion said to him, “Remember the *Sirât* and how small it will be.”

¹ where the righteous believers will hold their Book of Records in the right hand.

² *At-Tathkirah*, p. 98

³ *Sifatu as-Safwah*, vol. 3 p. 280

⁴ *Sifatu as-Safwah*, vol. 3 p. 349

Do we draw any lessons from these tales and from standing by the graves?

Once, Dâwud At-Taî participated in a funeral procession and stood aside while it was being buried. People came to where he was, sat next to him and he said:

“He who fears the warnings, then to him, the far will seem near. He who has prolonged hopes, his actions will succumb to shortcomings, and still, all what is bound to come is close-by.”

Know that all things that busy you from your Lord are a part of evil and that residents of the graves rejoice for what they have earned of good, but grieve for what they left behind.¹ Verily, people of this life fight with each other about what the residents of the graves are feeling sorry for collecting.²

How many people did the graves take in and what have they done to their corpses? The graves appear to be silent and dispersed, but what is inside them is in anything but silence.

Every person strives in this life, until he reaches a destination beyond which his life ends and his Book of Records shuts closed. Therefore, use this life and compare this day to yesterday, thus, avoiding repeating your errors and striving hard to increase the number of your good deeds. Do this before your lifetime expires and you become unable to perform more righteous actions and works.³

‘Ali رضي الله عنه went to the graveyard once and said:

“O residents of the graveyard! Either tell us or we will tell you. As for the news from our side, your wealth has been divided, your women remarried and your dwellings have

¹ Money which they did not spend in Allâh’s Cause, time they did not use in Allâh’s obedience, and so forth.

² *Sifatu as-Safwah* vol. 3 p. 135

³ *Adabu ad-Dunya wad-Din*, by Al-Mawardi, p. 123

taken new residents other than you.” He then said, “By Allâh! If they could speak, they would say, ‘We did not see provision better than *Taqwa* (piety).’”¹

Days pass quickly and we forget the loved ones and relatives whom we have buried. How many times in these days have we stopped talking about the affairs of this life and spoke instead about death, Reckoning and the grave?

‘Umar bin Abdul-Aziz رَحِمَهُ اللهُ said to one of his associates:

“I stayed up late last night thinking about the grave and its residents. If you see the dead person in his grave only three nights after his death, you will feel estranged from him, even though you used to feel comfort in his company. You will see a home where bugs roam, puss run, worms live, as well as, odor and torn shrouds. This occurred to them after they had an appealing appearance and wearing good scents and clean clothes.”²

A wise man once said:

“There are four seas for four types of things. Death is the sea of this life, the innerself is the sea for lusts, the grave is the sea for sorrow and Allâh’s forgiveness is the sea that covers sin³.”⁴

We ask Allâh the All-Mighty to make the grave the best home we ever take residence in, until we end up in Paradise as wide as the heavens and earth, in a seat of truth, near the Omnipotent King (Allâh).

Abu Dardâ’ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ said:

“Should I tell you about the day I will become poor? It is

¹ *At-Tathkirah*, p. 13

² *Al-‘Aqibah*, p. 191

³ or deceives people by making them commit sins and delay repentance, saying that Allâh is Oft-Forgiving.

⁴ *Tasliyatuh Ahli Al-Masa-ib*, p. 193

the day when I am lowered in my grave.”¹

This, indeed, is the eternal poverty, not the poverty known in this life. In this small hole, the grave, you will have no chance to increase in righteous deeds or erase your sins, other than what you have already brought forth. This day, there is only reckoning and no actions.

‘Umar bin Dharr joined a funeral procession with the people once and when the corpse was laid next to the grave, ‘Umar wept and said:

“O dead person! You have finished the journey of this life, so *Tuba* (a tree in Paradise) for you if your good actions are accompanying you in your grave.”²

Whenever Al-Hasan bin Sâlih رَحِمَهُ اللهُ used to come near the graveyard, he would declare, “Your outward appearance seems quiet, but the problem is in your inward reality.”

A wise man once said, “The grave provides a sufficient lesson to draw, more so than the stories of ancient nations.”³

To continue, Harim bin Haiyân spent the night at the house of one of the Companions of the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ. In the morning, he asked the Companion, “What made you weep?” He said, “Remembering a night, the day thereafter is when the graves will scatter and bring forth their residents.”⁴

When Mâlik bin Dinâr’s brother died, Mâlik went to his funeral, stood next to his grave, wept and said, “By Allâh, O my brother! I will not feel comfort after you, until I know the destination you ended up with. By Allâh! I will not have knowledge in that destination as long as I am still alive.”⁵

¹ *Al-'Aqibah*, p. 190

² *Hilyatu Al-Auliyaa* vol. 5 p. 116

³ *Adabu Ad-Dunya wad-Din*, p. 130

⁴ *Sifatu As-Safwah*, vol. 3 p. 214

⁵ *Al-'Aqibah*, p. 153

Sufyân Ath-Thauri said, "He who remembers the grave often, will find it a garden in Paradise, while he who ignores its remembrance will find it a hole in the Fire."¹

By Allâh! We did not see any type of people who did not depart this life. The old and the young departed, those who lived long and those whose term was short.

Hasan Basri رَحِمَهُ اللهُ once participated in a funeral, sat next to the empty grave hole and said, "A matter (life) that ends like this deserves to feel disinterest about its beginning. A matter that starts like this (death) deserves that its end is feared (i.e., the Hereafter)."²

Ahmad bin Harb رَحِمَهُ اللهُ said, "The earth is amazed at he who makes his bed soft and prepares it for sleep, saying, 'O son of Adam! Will you then remember the long sleep you will have in my belly, with no barrier between me and you?'"³

Therefore, what separates you from death, and how many are they who woke up in a morning, but did not reach its night, or spent a night, but did not live to see its morning?

A man once wrote to Salih bin Abdul-Quddus, "Death is a door which all people will pass through. So what will be the residence behind that door?" Salih wrote back, "The dwelling is either the Garden of Eden, if you worked in Allâh's Pleasure, or the Fire, if you fell into shortcomings. These are two dwellings awaiting the people, so choose which one of them you prefer for yourself."⁴

Furthermore, Mughith Al-Aswad رَحِمَهُ اللهُ said:

"Visit graves every day with your thoughts, and imagine the good delights of Paradise every day in your minds. Think about when the two groups will be taken away, one

¹ *Tasliyatuh Ahli al-Masa-ib*, p. 194

² *Al-Mudhish*, p. 190

³ *Al-'Aqibah*, p. 195

⁴ *Adabu ad-Dunya wad-Din*, p. 131

to Paradise and the other to Hell. Contemplate in heart and mind about the Fire and its iron bars (used for punishment).”¹

Those who remember death and the end it brings to the chance to perform more good deeds, will be encouraged and their resolve will be made stronger, especially if one remembers that the dead cannot recite even one *Tasbih* (*Subhanallâh* — all the praises are due to Allâh) or *Tahmid* (*Al-Hamdu Lillâh* — all thanks to Allâh). So rush to perform righteous deeds while still alive and able.

Yazid Ar-Riqqâshi رحمه الله used to say to himself:

“Woe to you, O Yazid! Who will pray on your behalf after you die? Who will fast on your behalf after you die? Who will please your Lord on your behalf after you die?” He would then declare, “O people! Why do you not weep and weep for yourselves the rest of your life? You, whose destination is death, whose home will be the grave, whose bed will be the ground and who will have worms as companions. As if this is not sufficient, you still await the greatest horror (Day of Resurrection), so how will your condition be like?”²

As-Sariy رحمه الله said:

“Make your grave your treasury, which you fill with as much good works as you can. When you end up in it, you will surely be pleased with what it has kept for you.”³

To continue, ‘Ali رضي الله عنه passed by the graveyard once and said, “*Salâm* (peace) be unto you, O residents of the lonely homes and empty places. You went before us and we will soon follow you, being your former generation. O Allâh! Forgive and

¹ *Hilyatu Al-Auliyyaa*, vol. 10 p. 143

² *Al-'Aqibah*, p. 40

³ *Az-Zuhd*, by Al-Baihaqi, p. 229

pardon us and them. *Tuba* for those who remember the Return, work for the Reckoning and feel content with sufficient provisions, all the while feeling pleased in all conditions with Allâh, the Exalted.”¹

Where are we from the established *Sunnah* of visiting graves [without travelling for such visits] and drawing lessons from visiting the dead who were taken away suddenly and buried without objection?

One is amazed at seeing some people in the graveyard laughing, as if the belly of the earth did not erase the remains of the dead therein. You see them heedless, talking excessively about everything except the grave, even though the dead are all around them in their graves. Is this heedlessness not, the biggest heedlessness? Where does this occur, at the graveyard in the midst of neighboring graves, yet its residents are far away from each other (some in a garden of Paradise and others in a hole in the Fire).

It was reported that Hasan Basri رَحِمَهُ اللهُ saw a man eating in the graveyard and commented, “This is a hypocrite, he sees death before his eyes, but his stomach craves for food!”²

Remember when it will be time for people to leave you in the grave and go away, when silence and idleness will fill the scene, might that Allâh grants you His Mercy and make your home in the grave a lively one.

¹ *Al-'Aqibah*, p. 196

² *Tanbihu Al-Ghafilin*, vol. 2 p. 617

Prophetic Guidance With Regards to Graves

The Prophet's guidance directs us not to bury the deceased when the sun is rising, or setting, or when it is noon. His guidance directs us to make a hole within the grave (*Lahd*), making the hole deep with enough space next to and around the dead person's head and feet. It was reported that when the dead were lowered into the grave, he used to say, "In the Name of Allâh, relying on Allâh and following the religion of the Messenger of Allâh."¹

The Prophet's guidance also included throwing sand on the grave thrice after the dead is buried, at the end that contains his head. After burying the dead, the Prophet ﷺ would stand next to his grave with his Companions and ask Allâh to grant firmness for him (when angels *Munkir* and *Nakir* ask each dead person about the Lord, religion and Messenger he or she believed in) and commanded his Companions to invoke Allâh for the same.

The Prophet ﷺ did not raise graves or build around them using stones or mud, nor did he build monuments around them.

The Messenger ﷺ forbade using graves as places of worship, lighting lamps around them, and cursed those who fall into these practices. The Prophet ﷺ forbade using graves as direction of the prayer, disallowed his *Ummah* from using his gravesite as a feast and cursed women who often visit graves.

The Prophet's guidance directs us not to humiliate or deface graves or to walk, sit and recline on them. He forbade that graves be revered in any way or form, such as taking them as places of worship, praying next to and before them, taking their sites as

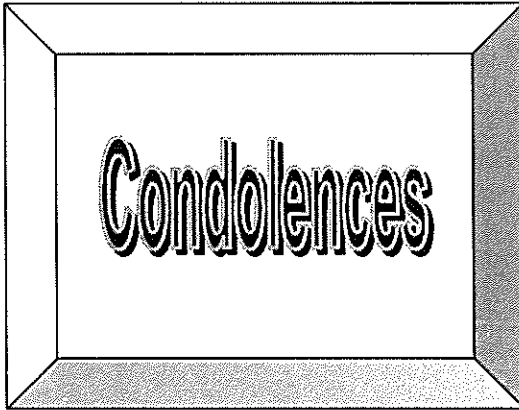
¹ A *Hasan Hadith* collected by *At-Tirmidhi*, *Abu Dâwud* and *Ibn Mâjah* from Ibn 'Umar رضى الله عنهم.

places of feasts and worshipping them^{1 2}

¹ He also forbade invoking the dead for anything — whatever it was, believing that the dead can benefit the living or themselves in the least and vowing to them. Moreover, *Tawâf* (circumambulating) is only legislated around the Ka'bah at Makkah and never around graves

² Refer to *Zadul-Ma'ad min Hadyi Khayri al 'Ibad* vol. 1 p. 521 and thereafter.

Fifth Stop:



Condolences

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said:

«مَا مِنْ مُؤْمِنٍ يُعَزِّي أَخَاهُ بِمُصِيبَةٍ إِلَّا كَسَاهُ اللَّهُ سُبْحَانَهُ مِنْ حُلَلِ الْكَرَامَةِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.»

“Every believer who gives condolences to his brother (in Faith) due to a calamity that befell him, then Allâh, the Most Honored, will cover him with the suits of honor on the Day of Resurrection.” (*Ibn Mâjah*)

After death strikes, many people offer their condolences in obedience to the command of their Lord and imitating the guidance of their Prophet’s *Sunnah* (statements and practices). They give condolences to the family of the deceased, who was dear to them, but they, being believers, accepted Allâh’s Decision, seeking His reward and tremendous favor:

﴿الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ۝ أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ﴾ [البقرة: ١٥٦، ١٥٧]

“Who, when afflicted with calamity, say: ‘Truly, to Allâh we belong and truly, to Him we shall return.’ They are those on whom are the *Salawât* (i.e., who are blessed and will be forgiven) from their Lord, and (they are those who) receive His Mercy, and it is they who are the guided ones.” (2:156,157)

Shamit bin ‘Ajlân said, “People are of two types, those who take provisions from this life and those who indulge in its delights, so which type of people are you? You like to remain longer in this life, but what for? Is it to obey Allâh, the Exalted and Most Honored, worship Him perfectly and draw close to Him with righteous, good deeds? If this is the case, then, might *Tuba* (a tree in Paradise) be for you. Or is it to eat, drink, play, rejoice, collect the wealth of this world and enjoy this life you and your wife and children? Worse it is then, what you sought a long life

to accomplish.”

We have a lesson to draw from in every death, and a wisdom to gain from the destination each deceased goes to.¹ ‘Ubaid bin ‘Umair رَحِمَهُ اللهُ said:

“A man had three friends, some of whom were closer to him than others. He was struck by a calamity and met the closest of the three to him and said, ‘Such and such calamity has befallen me, and I would appreciate your help.’ He refused, so the man went to second closest friend and said, ‘Such and such calamity has befallen me, and I would appreciate your help.’ He said, ‘I will accompany you to where you want to go, but will leave you there and come back.’ So he went to the third friend and said to him, ‘I have suffered such and such calamity, would you help me?’ He said, ‘I will go wherever you go and be wherever you may be.’ The first friend was his wealth, which remained with his family and none of it followed him [to the grave]. The second was his family and tribe, they accompanied him to his grave and then went back, leaving him there. The third was his actions, and one’s actions are always with him wherever he goes and exist wherever he may be.”²

Abu Hâzim رَحِمَهُ اللهُ was asked:

“How will the returning to Allâh be like?” He said, “As for the obedient, his return is that of he (a loved one) who was absent, so his family is eager for his return. As for the sinner, it will be like the return of a slave who ran away when he returns to his angry master.”

Hameed At-Tawil رَحِمَهُ اللهُ was standing in prayer when he died, and the people mentioned him to Ibn ‘Aun, praising Hameed for

¹ *Al-‘Aqibah*, p. 43

² *Hilyatu Al-Auliya’*, vol. 3 p. 269

his good qualities. Ibn ‘Aun commented:

“Now, Hameed is in need of what he has sent forward [of good actions].”¹

Also, after Hassân bin Hwraith recited this *Āyah*:

﴿وَكُلَّ إِنْسَانٍ أَلْزَمْنَاهُ طَلْفِرًا فِي عُنُقِهِ﴾ [الإسراء: ١٣]

“And We have fastened every man’s deeds to his neck...”
(17:13)

He commented: There are two openings and one closing! As long as you are still alive, O son of Adam, your record of deeds will still be open, so dictate whatever you want to be recorded in it. When you die, your record will be closed and when you are resurrected, it will be opened again:

﴿اقْرَأْ كِتَابَكَ كَفَىٰ بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيبًا﴾ [الإسراء: ١٤]

“Read your book. You yourself are sufficient as a reckoner against you this Day.” (17:14)²

Therefore, the Book of Records for the living person is where his actions and deeds (whether good or evil) are recorded. When one’s life ends, his Book of Records will be closed on whatever has been recorded in it. Our Books of Records are still open, so what is being written in it?

Hasan Basri رحمه الله said:

“A man said to his brother, ‘My brother! Have you been told that you will certainly pass over Hell?’ He said, ‘Yes.’ He asked again, ‘Have you been told that you will safely pass over it?’ He said, ‘No.’ His brother said, ‘Why do you laugh then?’ His brother was never seen laughing until he died.”^{3,1}

¹ *Tathkiratu al-‘Huffath*, vol. 1 p. 152

² *Sifatu as-Safwah*, vol. 3 p. 230

³ Islam discourages excessive laughing, for it makes the heart hard.

Amazing is the matter of those who remember death, yet rejoice, fear loss, yet forget, who are certain of the imminence of their demise, yet boast, and indulge in useless speech even though the Hereafter is being mentioned to them.²

‘Umar bin Abdul-Aziz said to Abu Hâzim, “Advise me.” Abu Hâzim said, “Lay down, imagine that death is right next to your head and think about what you would like to be doing during that moment, so that you practice it now, and about what you hate to be doing and abandon it now.”

By Allâh! If we lay down and imagine that death is staying right next to our heads, we will abandon much of our actions, statements and deeds, as well as, become active practicing righteous deeds in sincerity to Allâh. Moreover, life will diminish in our eyes, in preparation for meeting death when its time comes.

Thâbit bin Mutarrif رَحِمَهُ اللهُ said: “Dear brethren! Perform good actions, for if the matter is as easy as we hope, with Allâh’s Mercy and Pardon, our righteous actions will raise our grades in Paradise. If the matter is harder, which we fear and are weary of, we will not be among those who say:

﴿ رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا نَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا غَيْرَ الَّذِي كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ ﴾ [فاطر: ٣٧]

‘Our Lord! Bring us out, we shall do righteous good deeds, not (the evil deeds) that we used to do.’ (35:37)

Rather, we will say that we did some good deeds, but they did not avail us.”

A man once said to Zuhair bin Na‘îm: “O Abu Abdur-Rahmân! Do you recommend anything?” He said, “Yes. Beware that Allâh takes you away while you are engaged in heedlessness.”³

¹ *At-Tathkirah*, p. 390

² *Al-Mudhish*, p. 181

³ *Sifatu as-Safwah*, vol. 4 p. 9

This advice is indeed the advice that lasts. Moreover, love in Allâh for others requires us to encourage them to perform the acts of worship and forbid them from evil.

Abu Hâzim رحمه الله said:

“O son of Adam! The ultimate news will come to you after death.”¹

However, at that time, sorrow and grief will not change this news.

So imagine, dear Brother and Sister, that the records of the creation have started flying [each ending up in the hands of its owner], the Scales [of good vs. evil deeds] have been raised and you are called by your name while the creation hears, “Where is so-and-so, son of so-and-so?”²

Ibrahim bin Abu ‘Abdah said, “I was told that when the believer dies, he will wish he could come back to this life, so that he could recite a *Takbir* (*Allâhu Akbar* — Allâh is the Most Great), or *Tahlil* (*La ilaha illallâh* — there is no deity worthy of worship except Allâh), or *Tasbih* (*Subhânallâh* — all praise is due to Allâh).”³

There is still ample opportunity to act for those who are living, but many of them waste this precious time in heedlessness. Time passes as fast as wind and as quick as clouds when tailed by strong gust, and no matter how long man will live in this life, his term is still short because death will sooner or later put an end to it.

By the time death arrives, the years and decades that one lived will fade away, just as if they were but a few moments that passed as fast as lightening.⁴

¹ *Shar’hu as-Sudur*, p. 22

² *At-Tathkirah*, p. 294

³ *Shar’hu as-Sudur*, p. 8

⁴ *Al-Waqtu fi ‘Hayati al-Muslim*, by Yusuf al-Qaradhawi, p. 9

To only think about death and its remembrance, is a right on he who will end up dead, who will have sand as abode, worms as companions, *Munkir* and *Nakir* as associates, the grave as home, the belly of the earth as resting place, the Day of Resurrection as appointed meeting time and Paradise or Hell as destination — prepare for it, have concern pertaining to it, anticipate its coming and indulge in its affairs. He ought to consider himself among the dead and see himself among the residents of the graves. Certainly, all that shall come to pass is near, while what will not come, is surely far away.¹

Al-Auza' رحمه الله said:

“He who remembers death often, will be content with little provisions, and he who knows that his words are among his actions, will speak little.”²

It was reported that a man came to one of our *Salaf* while he was eating and said to him, “Your brother has died.” He said to him, “Sit down and eat, for I had prior knowledge in the news you brought.” He asked him, “How, when I was the first to convey this news to you?” He said, “Through Allâh’s Statement:

﴿كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ﴾ [آل عمران: ١٨٥]

“Everyone shall taste death.” (3:185)³

Therefore, if you can increase your provision each day for the journey to your destination, then do so. Certainly, the end comes faster than you think, so take enough provisions, prepare yourself, and write a will and testament for your own benefit. Know that past nights and days will never come back, nor will the chance to act. Know that the fate that is pursuing you is vigorous, and that the days and nights only bring faster your demise, the end of your life and the expiration of your term. Do

¹ *Al-'Ihyâ*, vol. 4 p. 475

² *Sifatuas-Safwah*, vol. 4 p. 258

³ *Ath-Thabat 'inda Al-Mamat*, p. 20

not rest or feel safe until you know where your final dwelling, destination, residence and home will be. Beware your interests and mend what you have missed. Decide what you should decide about your affairs, for death might all of a sudden overcome you. Soon after, the Day of Resurrection will commence, the soul that used to order evil will admonish you, the eye that slept long will be wide open and the hearts of the disobedient will be slaughtered, after they had been heedlessly roaming all over.¹

A wise man once wrote to his friend, "My brother! Beware of death while still in this life, before you end up in a life where you will wish to die, but there will be no death."²

Also, one of our *Salaf* was told, "It is good to die now." He commented, "Do not say these words, for an hour you live during which you invoke Allâh's forgiveness is better for you than death."

An old man was asked, "Do you like that death comes to you now?" He said, "No." He was asked, "Why not?" He said, "Youth has gone away with its evil aspects, and old age has come with its goodness. So when I stand, I say 'In the Name of Allâh'; and when I sit down, I say, 'All the thanks are due to Allâh.' I like to remain like this."

By Allâh! We still have this and more, so how are we using and spending this respite?

Therefore, weigh your actions and recompense yourselves for them, before your life term end, because death brings an end to actions and commences the reckoning. Death is near, and you do not know when it will come to you. Reckoning is hard, and you do not know when it will commence. Grey hairs are a warning that death is near, so be ready for it and know that there are many a wisher who never gains what he wished for! There are those

¹ *Az-Zahru al-Fa-i'h*, p. 10

² *Irshadu Al-'Ibad*, p. 15

who start a day, but never live until its sunset, or start a night never living until its morning!

What more deceived us other than prolonged hopes and love for this life, but how long do we think we will live? We think that death is far away and this false expectation is further strengthened by the incapacitating strings of unawareness and shortcomings.

Dâwud At-Tâi رحمه الله, used to say:

“If I thought that I would live one more month, I would feel that I committed a major error! How can I hope for this time, when I see afflictions descending on the creations day and night?”¹

Dear Brother and Sister!

Know that the wise person relies on his good works, while the ignorant relies on wishes and hopes.²

Know that prolonged hope brings laziness from performing righteous good deeds, causes feebleness and delaying repentance, and directs one to feeling inclined to the earth, hence succumb to various lusts and desires.

A righteous man said, “We visited Mughirah Al-Kharrâz when he was ill and asked him, ‘How are you?’ He said, ‘I find myself heavy with sin!’ We asked, ‘What do you complain of?’ He said, ‘Sorrow for the extended period of heedlessness.’ We asked, ‘What do you wish for?’ He said, ‘Going towards what Allâh likes and moving from what He hates.’ All those present wept.”³

Know, may Allâh grant you His Mercy, that remembering your brethren, friends, companions and peers who perished before you helps you think about death and dedicate your time and attention for its implications. They had as much eagerness for this life as

¹ *Al-'Aqibah*, p. 67

² *Al-'Aqibah*, p. 68

³ *Al-'Aqibah*, p. 120

you have, sought things as you have, had hopes as you have, and worked in this life as you do. However, death cut off their necks, removed their veins, broke their backs and brought grief to their families and loved ones. They became a sign for those who contemplate and a lesson for those who draw lessons.¹

By Allâh, how amazing was their death! How many among them were pulling the end of their robes in pride, boasting with their friends and feeling above their peers, all the while having extended hopes and wishes. They were asked to see, but they did not see, they were commanded, but they did not obey and were forbidden, but they did not cease and desist. They only heard the calls and lures of lusts, accepted the invitation of those who called to this evil path, rejoiced and felt joy for this invitation, and joked, jested and went to sleep with the same hopes they started the day with. They thus ended up with what they started with and made sure that what they wanted was well taken care of. They had high hopes, until when they earned what they sought after, or almost did; their end heralded at them with the weep of an angry person and struck them as the distressed person is struck, smashing their flanks, breaking their branches, dispersing their aids and friends and making them end up selling the expensive item for the cheap one and giving away the pricey for a little amount. They went away biting on the nails that they wronged, retrieving nothing, nor taking with them anything substantial or minor. We seek refuge with Allâh from evil decisions and wicked choices.²

When Abdullâh bin 'Ali was dying, he wept and was asked why he wept. He replied, "I weep because of the shortcomings I fell into in previous days and my few good actions that could qualify me to earn the High Paradise and avert the blazing Fire."³

weeping might help us before it is too late, that is, before the

¹ *Al-'Aqibah*, p. 50

² *Al-'Aqibah*, p. 52

³ *Al-'Aqibah*, p. 131

agonies and stupor of death come. A scholar once said, "Would there be delight in life when there is no healer for death?"¹

Moreover, when Ar-Rabi' bin Khaitham رضى الله عنه was dying, he was asked, "Should we bring a doctor for you?" He thought for a short while and replied, "Where are 'Ad, Thamud, the Dwellers of Rass and the generations before and after that? They had cures and healers, but neither the healers nor the healed remained; they all faded away and perished."^{2,3}

Certainly, healers cannot avert destiny:

﴿ كَلَّا إِذَا بَلَغَتِ الرَّاقِيَ ○ وَقِيلَ مَنْ رَاقٍ ○ وَظَنَّ أَنَّهُ الْفِرَاقُ ○ وَالْتَفَتِ السَّائِي بِالسَّائِي ○ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ ○
يَوْمَئِذٍ السَّائِي ﴾ [القيامة: ٢٦-٣٠]

"Nay, when (the soul) reaches to the collarbone. And it will be said: 'Who can cure him?' And he (the dying person) will conclude that it was (the time) of parting. And one leg will be joined with another leg (shrouded). The drive will be on that Day to your Lord (Allâh)!" (75:26-30)

We will be returned to a Generous, Forgiving and Merciful Lord, Who pardons the sins and accepts repentance. We do not have a Lord or God besides Him.

Mâlik bin Dinâr رضى الله عنه said, "I saw Ibn Bashâr in a dream a year after he died and greeted him with the *Salâm*, but he did not return the *Salâm*. I said to him, 'What did you face after death?' His eyes became tearful and he said, 'I faced horrors and tremendous calamities.' I asked, 'What happened after that?' He said, 'What the Most Generous would do: He accepted the good

¹ *Al-'Aqibah*, by Al-Ishbili, p. 43

² We should assert here that the Prophet ﷺ ordered Muslims to seek medicines and cures for their illnesses, but taught us that none except Allâh heals. If someone took a cure and was healed, it would have happened only by Allâh's Leave, Will and Permission.

³ *Al-'Aqibah*, p. 119

deeds, erased the sins and guaranteed the high grades.¹”

We weep for dead people and remember them, but we ought to remember ourselves, as well.

Hasan Basri رَحِمَهُ اللهُ used to say:

“O son of Adam! You will die alone, be resurrected alone and be recompensed alone. O son of Adam! If all people obey Allâh and you disobey Him, their obedience will not benefit you. If they all disobey Allâh and you obey Him, their disobedience will not harm you. O son of Adam! Beware of your sins, for it is your flesh and blood at stake. If you are saved from the evil repercussions of your sins, your flesh and blood will be saved for you. If it is the other destination, then it is a Fire that will never be extinguished, a body that will never perish (eternal in torment) and a soul that will never die.”²

Therefore, rush to erase sin with repentance, for, “Sin has the effect on the heart of that of drops of oil which fall on a garment, if you do not wash the garment quickly, the oil will stain it.”³

By Allâh! The days of those who give condolences are numbered, even though a few days or months afterwards, they will forget their intimate friends who perished.

Dear Brother and Sister!

Do not stop weeping until you know who your company on the Day of Return will be. Do not let sleep touch your eyes until you become sure of your destination on the day thereafter. Do not go to bed while happy, for you do not know how things will truly

¹ We should assert here that dreams are but dreams, they do not change an Islamic Law or give a definite indicator that they are true or will become true in the future. Only the Prophets saw truthful visions that became true, and these visions came from Allâh.

² *Al-Hasan Al-Basri*, p. 101

³ *Al-Mudhish*, p. 357

turn out to be.

The dead did not weep because they died, but because of their feeling sorrow for losing the chance to act righteously. By Allâh, they missed a life in which they did not take necessary provisions and entered a life they did not prepare for. How many more hours do we have left in this life?

Hopes are being dissipated, while lives end abruptly, leading to bodies disintegrating under the sand. The day and night are rotating rapidly, bringing closer what is far and making everything new, become old. This fact alone should prompt one to hurry away from lusts and desires, all the while encouraging him or her to perform righteous, good deeds that would remain and last.

Perform and practice as many good actions as you can, as long as you still have time and enjoy a respite, prepare your final bed and take precautions for that death to come.¹

¹ *Faidhul-Qadir*, vol. 6 p. 185

Prophetic Guidance With Regards to Giving Condolences to the Family of the Deceased

The Prophet's guidance in this case is that he would give condolences to the family of the deceased.¹ It was not from his guidance to gather or invite people for giving condolences or to recite the Qur'ân for the deceased, whether on his or her grave or otherwise. All these practices comprise hated innovations in the religion. The Prophet's guidance was to be calm and accepting in Allâh's Decision, thanking Him, admitting that the return will be to Him and disallowing the tearing of clothes or weeping aloud or shaving the head when death strikes someone close.²

Among the guidance of the Prophet ﷺ is that the family of the deceased are given food by others, so that they do not have to cook for the visitors. This, indeed, is among the best types of conduct and generosity, for it involves comforting the family of the deceased who are certainly more involved with their affliction than to feed visitors!

Also, the Prophet ﷺ used to forbid eulogies for the dead, saying that it is among the practices of *Jâhiliyyah* (days of ignorance).

Dear Brother and Sister!

May Allâh gather us and you in the Dwelling of Honor and make the agonies of death easy on us. May Allâh make us firm concerning believing in and reciting the true declaration -that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allâh- in this life and the grave. May Allâh comfort us during our loneliness in the

¹ Wherever one meets them, whether in the mosque, marketplace, or at their work, etc.

² Islam also disallows erecting tents for the purpose of accepting condolences, hiring reciters of the Qur'ân to recite it in these tents, and so forth among the innovations practiced with regards to the dead and funerals; and refer to the book on *Ahkâm-ul-Janâ'iz* by Shaikh Al-Albâni.

graves, make us firm on the *Sirât* on the Day of Resurrection, forbid our faces and the faces of our fathers and mothers from the Fire and gather us with them in the best abode (Paradise) before the Able King. All the thanks and praises are due to Allâh, the Lord of the worlds.¹

¹ Refer to *Zadul-Ma'ad*, by Imam Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah, vol. 1 p. 527